

THE RESTORED ORDER OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION

WITH

IMPLICATIONS ON THE MEANING OF  
THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

By

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To Joseph and Brigid McNulty

May they rest in peace!

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Abstract

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In 2000 Bishop Anthony M. Pilla established a process to study the implementation of the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation in the Diocese of Cleveland. Ten parishes were chosen to be part of the “pilot” study including Holy Cross Parish in Euclid, Ohio. The Restored Order re-establishes the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist to their original proper sequence emphasizing that these sacraments are primarily rites of initiation into the Catholic Church. The proper sequence also emphasizes that these sacraments have a dependency on one another and are not to be viewed as separate individual rites or celebrations.

The focus of this project is the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation and the implications it has on the meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation as implemented in Holy Cross Parish. This project also focuses, in a limited way, on the implementation of the Restored Order in other parishes in the “pilot” study.

When the proper sequence of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist is not followed the understanding that these rites are initiation in character is lost and new meanings are attached to these sacraments. This is specifically true about the Sacrament of Confirmation. When celebrated out of its proper sequence, Confirmation is understood as a rite of decision that one makes about living out faith as a Catholic or as a rite of maturity.

This project seeks to address the following: 1) That the Restored Order of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist supports the understanding that these are initiation rites that are unified and dependent on each other; and 2) That the Restored Order shifts the understanding of Confirmation from a rite of maturity and decision making to a rite of initiation. The Restored Order encourages Catholics to see these rites not as catechetical moments or rites that complete formation but as rites of initiation that invite believers into a life journey of faith formation of worship and service of God and neighbor.

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## **Introduction**

Christianity is certainly not unique in having initiation rites. Every cultural society and organization has ways that initiate members. Whether it is a scout group, a fraternity or sorority, a business or a school, or becoming a citizen in a country there is some process of introduction. Even the family has a process of welcoming someone through birth and by introduction to cultural and family traditions.

Coming from a large family, being invited to sit at the dining room table holds great symbolism for me as a rite of initiation. My family consists of eight siblings with a multitude of relatives. In our family, meals are usually shared in the kitchen. If there are guests or because of a special occasion the dining room table is used. Yet, even on these occasions, not everyone sits at the dining room table. There is only so much room. As members of the family marry or move, space is made for another at the table.

My “initiation” came the day my aunt arrived from Ireland for a family visit. On that occasion, I was invited to sit at the dining room table with the instructions to “listen to what is said and to eat all that was placed before me.” I knew then I had a place at the table and more importantly, I knew I had place in the family.

At this table, stories are shared about life, about family and about God. At this table we laugh, we argue, we cry, and we bond with one another. My parents are now both deceased but this table is still the place where the family gathers with new members to bond and to share the stories that shape our lives.

For the Church, the “table of the Lord” is the place where initiation into the Church is completed. The reception of Eucharist after Baptism completes one’s entrance into the Church.

In the history of the Church, the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist have lost their meaning as rites of initiation. This is partially because they are not celebrated in the Western Church in one celebration but are celebrated over a period of time and out of their proper sequence. This loss of identity as initiation rites seems most evident regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Confirmation, for most people, has little to do with initiation and is perceived as the sacrament that makes the candidate an “adult” Catholic with full responsibilities regarding the faith. It is understood as the sacrament that celebrates the time when one “decides” to live as a Catholic in the world. It is perceived as a distinct rite separate from Baptism and Eucharist having its own meaning.

The renewal initiated by the Second Vatican Council calls the Church to rediscover the meaning of the sacraments in the life of the Church, especially the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. The *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* called for the restoration of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) and asks for the renewal of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist to reflect that they are rites of initiation with a relationship with each other.<sup>1</sup>

When celebrated at the Easter Vigil, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are understood as rites that initiate people into the Church while these same rites, when celebrated over a period of time, communicate meanings that have little to do with initiation. Does the Church have different meanings regarding these sacraments, especially Confirmation? The sequence followed for these sacraments communicate different messages.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in The Liturgy Documents: A Parish Resource* (Chicago: The Liturgy Training Program, 2004), #64-71.

What is the true meaning of Confirmation? Is it a rite of initiation or a rite of maturity? Because of the “vagueness” as to its meaning, many are never confirmed. This seems to have little effect on their participation in the life of the Church and the celebration of the other sacraments (unless one is seeking Holy Orders or wishes to be a sponsor in Baptism or Confirmation). Compounding the issue is the fact that the age for celebrating this Confirmation is often determined by bishops and pastors who have their own understanding as to the meaning of this sacrament. Has Confirmation lost its relevancy in the Church? Is it a sacrament with conflicting meaning?

The *Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation* states that Confirmation is to be understood as a rite of initiation and not a rite of maturity. In the introduction to this document, Pope Paul VI indicates the need for a renewal of the Sacrament of Confirmation that reflects its initiation character with a relationship to Baptism and Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Only when understood in relationship to Baptism and Eucharist can Confirmation be understood as an initiation rite.

The Conference of Bishops in the United States does not have a set age for when Confirmation is to be received. The Conference allows bishops to determine the age for this rite, usually anytime between the ages of seven and eighteen.

Holy Cross parish is part of a “pilot” study that allows for the option of implementing the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation with the celebration of Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist. Criteria for a parish to be part of this study are that it possesses a strong process for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA),

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<sup>2</sup> United States Conference of Bishops, “Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation” in *The Rites of the Catholic Church as revised by the Second Vatican Council*, vol. 1 (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990), 472.



a formation process for the reception of the sacraments and a strong youth ministry program.

Due to a variety of historical, liturgical and pastoral influences, there is widespread confusion about the theological meaning of Confirmation, resulting in differing opinions concerning the proper time of its celebration in relation to Baptism and Eucharist (i.e., First Communion). Celebrating Confirmation in the Restored Order (i.e. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) offers the pastoral and liturgical opportunity to emphasize its nature as a Sacrament of Christian Initiation. Changing a parish community's experience of Confirmations' ritual celebration to the Restored Order (i.e., from Baptism - First Communion - Confirmation to Baptism – Confirmation – First Communion) will also change the parish community's understanding of the theology of Confirmation as a Sacrament of Christian Initiation.

This project is divided into four sections:

## **I. Historical and Theological Basis for the Restored Order**

The historical development of the sequence and the age when the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist takes place affect their meaning. This is especially true regarding the Sacrament of Confirmation. Geoffrey Robinson, the auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia suggests that Confirmation has two theologies, one a rite of initiation and the other a rite of maturity when the individual decides to live life committed to the work of the Church.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Robinson, "Confirmation: A Bishop's Dilemma". *Worship*, 78 (January, 2004): 50.

Confirmation as an initiation rite has roots in the history of the Church when celebrated with Baptism and Eucharist. Confirmation as a rite of maturity finds meaning in the history of the Church when it is celebrated after Baptism and Eucharist due to the availability of the bishop and after sufficient catechetical formation. Both these understandings are elaborated on in this study.

Bishops and pastors often determine the age of Confirmation based on a particular meaning regarding this sacrament.<sup>4</sup> The Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation states that Confirmation is to be understood within its historical roots as a sacrament of initiation.

In Chapter One is an overview of the historical development of the Sacraments of Initiation with emphasis on the Sacrament of Confirmation. This overview suggests that the theological understanding of these sacraments is supported by the sequence of celebration that is followed. This overview focuses on the practice of the Western Church and refers to the practice followed in the Eastern Church when necessary.

Using the works by authors such as Maxwell E. Johnson in *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, Paul Turner in *Ages of Initiation*, and Henri Bourgeois in *On Becoming Christian*, the historical and theological development of these sacraments is discussed. This chapter provides the basis for the Restored Order as implemented at Holy Cross Parish.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul Turner, *Ages of Initiation: The First Two Christian Millennia* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), ix.

## **II. Implementation of the Restored Order**

The site for this project is the parish of Holy Cross that is located in Euclid, an inner-ring suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. Holy Cross Parish is eighty years old and serves the communities of both Euclid and Cleveland. It consists of people with a variety of ethnic backgrounds and racial diversity. The population is a mixture of both “blue collar” and “professional” people. The parish has very strong neighborhoods that often form sub-communities within its boundaries. Presently, the parish is facing both demographic and economic changes that are going to affect its future. This parish has a strong Catholic grade school and parish school of religion program. It has a strong process of formation for candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist. These formation programs are both family and parish based and not classroom centered.

Chapter Two explains the process that is used to implement the Restored Order in the parish of Holy Cross. A few steps are used to implement this process.

First, a consultation process takes place with the Staff of Holy Cross parish, catechists and the parish pastoral council. Second, an educational process for the entire parish regarding the Restored Order is developed. This educational component includes a parish study group, an adult education program and bulletin announcements. Third, meetings are held with various groups in the parish to present the Restored Order process. All these steps are used to elicit insights from people regarding the Restored Order and to prepare the community for its implementation.

This chapter also outlines the process that is implemented at Holy Cross to prepare candidates of catechetical age for the reception of Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist. This process involves the entire immediate and extended family of the

candidates working with catechists and staff members in preparation to complete the Rite of Initiation at First Eucharist.

### **III. Methodology for evaluation**

The goal of the Restored Order is to understand the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as rites of initiation. This is achieved when celebrated in their proper sequence. Celebrating Confirmation before the reception of Eucharist provides a meaning of Confirmation that is different from that which is understood by many Catholics.

Chapter Three provides the methodology that is used to analyze the research questions stated in this chapter. This analysis uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate whether or not the process used with families of candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist is effective in providing a new understanding of these sacraments being rites of initiation that have a connection with one another and with Baptism.

### **IV. Analysis and evaluation of the Project**

The purpose of Chapter 4 is to analyze and evaluate the project. This evaluation and analysis asks whether the participants in the *Children of Light* process have a new understanding as to the meaning of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as being initiation rites that are dependent on one another. Using the Microsoft Excel program, the information gleaned from the qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation is inputted to determine the answers to the research questions.

Besides Holy Cross Parish, this project studies the results of implementation taking place in other parishes that are part of the “pilot” study. The staffs of these parishes as well as the staff of Office for Catechetical Services are interviewed in order to evaluate the response to the Restored Order in other pastoral settings. Their insights and reflections are part of the analysis of the Restored Order.

## **V. Pastoral Reflections**

Ultimately, the success of this project depends on its value to pastoral life. In Chapter Five I reflect on the entire process used at Holy Cross. I also make suggestions regarding the furthering of the implementation of the Restored Order in this parish and in the Diocese of Cleveland.

## **VI. Appendices and Bibliography**

The final sections of this paper consist of appendices that provide the materials used in the process of *Children of Light* and the survey used to analyze the project. This is followed by an annotated bibliography indicating sources and references for the basis of the Restored Order.

Finally, it is important to note the limitations of this project. This project addresses only the research questions as stated. It does not provide a comprehensive study of the rites as celebrated in the Eastern Church. It also does not discuss the development of the customs that surround First Eucharist or the timing for the celebration of First Reconciliation. These issues, while important, need to be discussed in another venue.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Historical and Theological Overview**

The Church does not live in a vacuum but is impacted by historical situations. These situations help form the Church's identity as it continues the work of Christ. In this chapter the historical and theological development of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as the basis for the Restored Order are discussed.

#### **I. The Birth of the Church**

“The gift you receive, give as a gift” (Matthew 10:8). Once having heard and believing the message of Christ, the early disciples go out to proclaim the Good News to all the nations. *The Acts of the Apostles* reports how this early community carries out the mission of Christ and endures struggles each day to make message known.

While the Restored Order emphasizes the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are linked together as initiation rites, this is not explicit in the writings of the New Testament. Baptism, in the early Church, is modeled after the Baptism of Jesus by John at the Jordan (Mark 1:9-11). It is understood as the ritual conversion that the person experiences having faith in Jesus Christ. For instance, *The Acts of the Apostles* records the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch who encounters Philip contemplating the meaning of the Scriptures (Acts 8:26-40). After a brief catechesis, the Ethiopian asks Philip to baptize him. He is immersed in the water as an act of conversion from his old self to being a new person in Christ. The initiation process is simple. It calls for little instruction, a desire for forgiveness and the use of water that initiates the person into the

community.<sup>1</sup>

There is no structured ritual for initiation found the New Testament Church but there are rituals used to celebrate the initiation of new believers. The *Acts of the Apostles*<sup>2</sup> tells of incidents of how new members are baptized in the “name of the Lord Jesus” and then receive the Holy Spirit through the “laying on of hands.”<sup>3</sup> To express the conversion of the new member, the community uses symbols such as the clothing in a white garment, the “laying on of hands” and anointing as part of the ritual. It is doubtful that any of these are used regularly but eventually they are included in later rituals.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that a minister always has a role in the ritual because a person does not baptize oneself.<sup>5</sup>

There is no irrefutable evidence that the newly initiated share in the Eucharist at the time of Baptism. There is evidence, though, of the interrelationship between Baptism and Eucharist as rituals of the community because the Eucharist is shared only among those baptized. St. Paul tells the early believers of the unity they have in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16-17). He reminds them that this unity demands proper behavior at the Eucharist. The early community, then, has two rituals of initiation: Baptism and Eucharist (1 Cor. 11:17-21).

For this fledging community, Baptism is not a symbol of completed conversion. Through immersion into the water, the newly baptized is initiated into a community that

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<sup>1</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup> Acts 8: 14-17 & Acts 19:1-17.

<sup>3</sup> Maxwell Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press 1999), 23-24.

<sup>4</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

continues the formation of the newly initiated. This formation process is considered a life long journey of discovering the meaning of Christ in one's life. The baptized share in the Eucharist "remembering" Christ in the sharing of the body and blood that becomes food for the journey.

The rituals of Baptism and the sharing at the Eucharistic table indicate true conversion of the initiated. These rituals express belief in the Lord Jesus as Savior and Redeemer that brings change to the life of the converted. This life in Christ also demands a change in behavior that is reflected in the behavior of the initiated at the Eucharist. Paul tells them that they are new people and no longer can there be hostilities or divisions that exist among them (I. Cor. 11:17-21). While the early community may not have a fully developed initiation ritual, it establishes a pattern that the Church continues to develop.

Different patterns of initiation begin to emerge in the post Apostolic Church. The second century Christian document, *The Didache*, provides evidence of a process of initiation consisting of several stages: a developed prebaptismal catechesis; immediate preparation consisting of a one or two day fast during which the minister, the candidate, and, hopefully, the entire community participate; the celebration of the ritual of Baptism through immersion (the body is lowered into the water) or submersion (the body is plunged into the water), using the Trinitarian formula; and ongoing participation in the Eucharist.<sup>6</sup> There is evidence in both the New Testament and the *Didache* that Eucharist is reserved for the baptized.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 36-37.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 37.



Justin the Martyr (+165) provides insights into the Baptismal liturgy and states that the Eucharist is part of the baptismal rite:

As for us, after the candidates have been washed, we lead those who have believed and confessed their faith to the place where the ones called “the brothers and sisters” have gathered... When the presider has given thanks and all the people have expressed their assent, those who we call the deacons, give to each one of the participants some Eucharistic bread and wine mixed with water. They also carry to those absent.... Now we call this food “Eucharist,” and no one may take part of it except those who believe in the truth of our doctrines, who have been washed in the bath of forgiveness of sins and rebirth, and who live as Christ instructed. For we do not take foods as ordinary bread or ordinary drink, but... as the body and blood of Jesus incarnate...<sup>8</sup>

Justin the Martyr gives the theological insight that Baptism is not just about a person recognizing the need for forgiveness of sins, but it also is an “illumination” into a new way of life with the community.<sup>9</sup>

As the ritual for initiation develops, there is evidence in both the East and the West that the gestures of anointing and the laying on of hands are becoming part of the ritual. In the East, the Church of Syria employs the anointing and the “laying on of hands” that takes place before Baptism and concludes with the reception of Eucharist. The Church of North Africa has this anointing taking place after Baptism. The anointing, Christological in its meaning, is used to consecrate the newly baptized for the Eucharist and is understood as both healing and spiritual in character.<sup>10</sup>

The imposition of hands and reception of the Holy Spirit further illustrates two different traditions that reflect the uniqueness of these rites in the East and West. In the Syrian East, the Holy Spirit is associated with the prebaptismal anointing as the “sign” of

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<sup>8</sup> Justin, *Apology*: 1: 65, 1. 5-066.2, in Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 37.

<sup>9</sup> Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 5.

one's assimilation to the Messiah-Christ. This anointing invites one to share in the work of Christ, bringing the Good News to everyone. In the West, the Church of North Africa understands the prebaptismal and baptismal rites as rites of purification that lead to the post baptismal gift of the Holy Spirit who strengthens the person to carry the Gospel to all.<sup>11</sup>

In the second century, Tertullian (155-220) understands the act of Jesus' own Baptism as a prototype for a theology of Baptism. The fact that God anoints Jesus with the Spirit supports the postbaptismal anointing. As with the Baptism of John, those to be baptized recognize the need to confess sins and share in the bath of new life.<sup>12</sup>

Cyprian of Carthage (+258) builds upon the contributions of Tertullian in developing a theology of initiation:

- (1) The oil or "chrism" used for the one postbaptismal anointing is consecrated or "sanctified" on the altar within the context of the Eucharistic Liturgy (Letter 70, to Januarius, 2);
- (2) The question, 'Does thou believe in eternal life and remission of sins through the holy church?' (Letter 70, to Januarius, 1) was part of the baptismal interrogations; and
- (3) It is to the *bishops* that the newly baptized are immediately brought in order that 'by prayers and by the imposition of the hand (they might) obtain the Holy Spirit, and (be) perfected with the Lord's seal (*sinaculo dominico*)' (Letter 73 to Januarius, 9)<sup>13</sup>

During this time, there is evidence that infants in certain circumstances are baptized at the time when a family is being initiated into the Church. For Tertullian this practice is not undertaken because of belief that the innocence of children, even though

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<sup>11</sup> Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 63.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

born into sin, does not require the baptismal forgiveness of sins. Tertullian believes that everyone should wait until adulthood and when one marries to be baptized. For Origen of Alexandria, children are to be baptized because Baptism is a rite of purification freeing them from the sins for which they are not guilty.<sup>14</sup>

Cyprian and the Council of North Africa (251) stress that the Baptism of infants is not to be delayed. Cyprian's basis for this belief is stated in a letter sent to Bishop Fidus who institutes the policy of delaying the Baptism of infants. In this letter he states:

Our Council adopted an entirely different conclusion. No one agreed with you on the matter; instead, without exception we all formed the judgment that it is not right to deny the mercy of God to any man born. But seeing that the Lord says in His own Gospel: *The Son of Man has come not to destroy the souls of men but to save them*, we must do everything we possibly can to prevent the destruction of any soul. And that is the reason why, in our view, no one is to be prevented from obtaining grace by the law which was once in the past in force: circumcision of the flesh ought not to block the way to circumcision of the spirit. Rather, every man, without exception, has the right to be admitted to the grace of Christ since Peter, too, in the Acts of the Apostles declares *The Lord has said to me that no man is to be called impure and unclean*.<sup>15</sup>

By 300, the remission of sin at Baptism carries strong weight in the life of the Church. With the remission of sin, the candidate begins the process of initiation and can share in Eucharist.<sup>16</sup>

Baptism even takes place for those who are sick and/or are in danger of death. This is true for adults and infants. Many times these Baptisms are presided over by a

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<sup>14</sup> Turner, Paul. *The Ages of Initiation: The First Two Christian Millennia* [CD-ROM] (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), Ch.2, #6.

<sup>15</sup> Letter 64 in *Ancient Christian Writers: The Letters of St. Cyprian*, vol. 46 (New York: Newman Press, 1986), 110.

<sup>16</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 6.

minister other than the Bishop because of an emergency or the unavailability of the bishop to preside at the ritual.<sup>17</sup>

Elements in the *Apostolic Tradition* show that the Church in Rome follows a pattern to initiation rites used in North Africa that include a blessing of water, the renunciation of Satan, a profession of faith in an interrogatory form leading to the submersion or immersion of the candidate in the baptismal water, a postbaptismal anointing, a hand laying prayer associated with the bishop, and a consignation (the anointing with oil). The rites conclude with participation in the Eucharist that includes cups of milk and honey.<sup>18</sup>

The Church in Rome differs from the Church in North Africa in the celebration of the initiation rites as to the content of the postbaptismal handlaying prayer by the Bishop. There is an additional anointing by the Bishop at the end of the prayer. This pattern is reflective of the postbaptismal rites that would be developed in Rome.<sup>19</sup>

This period in the Church suggests that a variety of models of initiation is operative in the Church because of its multicultural nature. Even though local communities establish their own particular practices there are commonalities found in the rituals developed: water, anointing; the laying of the hand; and Eucharist. The ordinary minister of the initiation rites is the Bishop.<sup>20</sup>

These rites provide a theological understanding as to the meaning of initiation into the Church. The communities of Syria and Egypt see the event as reflective of the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>18</sup> Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 77.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Baptism of Jesus by John. Christian initiation means that new converts are adopted children of God assimilated by the Holy Spirit into the life of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The highpoint of this initiation rite is the prebaptismal anointing as the sign of the new reality that is taking place. For the Church in North Africa and Rome, the metaphor for Baptism is found in Romans 6 wherein the newly initiated participate in the death and resurrection of Christ. The prebaptismal rites are associated with purification and/ or exorcism as one prepares for the cleansing that takes place in the waters of Baptism with reception of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup>

Within the pattern of initiation in the East and the West, it is clear that adults and infants are initiated into the Church in the same celebration, usually at the Easter Vigil service. In one great service, as the community again remembers and celebrates Christ's passage from death to life, new members are initiated moving from death to life through the waters of Baptism, anointed into a royal priesthood and are welcomed to the banquet of the Kingdom at the table of the Eucharist. Since there is a bishop in each community, the Bishop presides at this great Vigil.<sup>22</sup>

At the beginning of the fourth century, initiation is celebrated in one celebration that consists of Baptism, anointing and Eucharist. It reflects the belief of the community that the paschal mystery penetrates its very life. During this period, historical events and pastoral needs begin to affect the initiation rites that result in the separation of Baptism from the other rites.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>22</sup> Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Re-visioning Confirmation within the Christian Initiation of Children," *National Bulletin on the Liturgy*, 33 (Summer 2000), 72-73.

<sup>23</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 7.

With the exception of the persecutions in the period between 303 and 313 the Church experiences little conflict with the Empire. Only in the East and in Egypt are there persecutions of the early Christians.<sup>24</sup> The year 311 is significant in the life of the Church when Constantine, the son of Constantine Chlorus, enters Italy and is proclaimed Emperor by his troops. With the defeat of Maxentius, a new era begins for the Church because Constantine credits his victory to the God of the Christians.<sup>25</sup>

Although Constantine is not baptized, he decides not to take action on his new belief that the God of the Christians is responsible for his good fortune. He does provide the Church with a new status because of what he believes as God's action in his life. In 312, he demands that Maximinus end the persecution of the Christians in the East. He orders the prefect of North Africa to return all church property and to free the clergy from the obligation of doing public service in order that they can devote themselves to worship.<sup>26</sup>

The promulgation of the *Rescript of Milan* gives official recognition of the Christian religion affording it legal status and making it the official religion of the Empire. As the Church begins to grow in size and influence pagan temples are converted into places for Christian worship. Bishops have new status in the empire holding civil and religious positions. The Church in the East is perceived as the "kingdom of God on

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<sup>24</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1967), 66-71.

<sup>25</sup> John C. Dwyer, *Church History: Twenty Centuries of Catholic Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 93.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

earth” equal to any political structure. The cross, a Christian symbol, becomes the sign of the imperial power.<sup>27</sup>

Before its status as religion of the empire, Christianity was centered in urban areas. With its new status, the Church begins to face new challenges. The Church needs to find ways to preach the Gospel to those living in rural and isolated communities and to draw them together as one worshipping community for the initiation rites.<sup>28</sup>

Councils are convened to discuss Church issues and to clarify issues of ministerial roles, and to determine patterns for the initiation rites. These councils provide insights regarding the meaning of the symbols used in these rites.<sup>29</sup>

The Church Fathers at the time write on the meaning of the initiation rites.<sup>30</sup> For Cyril of Jerusalem, the initiation paradigm becomes for the candidate a ritual enactment of the salvific events of Christ’s death and resurrection.<sup>31</sup> John Chrysostom compares the pre-baptismal anointing to that of athletes and soldiers preparing for battle. The anointing serves as a protective seal on those who renounce Satan.

After these words, after the renunciation of the devil, and the covenant with Christ, inasmuch as you have henceforth become his own and have nothing in common with the evil one, he straightway bids you to be marked and placed on your forehead the sign of the cross...The chrism is a mixture of olive oil and unguent; the unguent is for the bride, the oil is for the athlete...After the priest anoints all your limbs with this ointment, you will be secure and able to hold the serpent in check; you will suffer no more.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>28</sup> Canadian Conference of Bishops, 73.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 93.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 94-95.

<sup>32</sup> John Chrysostom, *Baptismal Instruction* 11:27, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 3, #2.

Theodore of Mopsuestia uses images of sheep or soldier regarding the prebaptismal anointing. The image of the sheep symbolizes that one follows another, while the soldier adheres to the commands of an authority figure. Theodore writes that the postbaptismal anointing means that one is sealed in the Trinity.<sup>33</sup> He also sees Baptism as a new birth and participation in the death of Christ. Participation in the Eucharist is the culmination of the Baptismal liturgy.<sup>34</sup>

When you have received grace by means of baptism and put on this shining white garment, the bishop comes to you and puts oil on your forehead, saying 'N. is sealed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'<sup>35</sup>

By the end of the fourth century, the postbaptismal anointing is in use throughout the Christian Church. This may be due to the influence of the Council of Laodice (381) requiring that a postbaptismal anointing with chrism be bestowed on the newly initiated now that they participate in the reign of Christ.<sup>36</sup>

The *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 381) directs the Bishop to administer the two anointings as prebaptismal and postbaptismal rites:

You...O bishop...shall anoint the head of those being baptized, whether men or women, with the holy oil, for a type of spiritual baptism. After that, either you, O bishop, or a presbyter under you, calling and naming over them the solemn invocation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shall baptize them in the water; and let the deacon receive the man and the deaconess the woman, that so the conferring of this invisible seal may take place with becoming decency. After that, let the bishop anoint with chrism those that have been baptized.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 3, #2.

<sup>34</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 106.

<sup>35</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Baptismal Homily III*, in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 3, #2.

<sup>36</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 8.

<sup>37</sup> *The Apostolic Constitutions* (3:16) *Baptismal Homily* 3:27, See Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, (cd), Ch 3, #2.



In the West, the fourth century bishop Ambrose of Milan gives a description of the initiation rites that take place outside of Rome in Northern Italy. Similar to the pattern of Rome, the postbaptismal anointing is reserved to the Bishop as the concluding act of the laying on of hands.<sup>38</sup> He incorporates the postbaptismal anointing with the anointing on the forehead, confirming the baptized with the prayer for the coming of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit.

Recall that you received a spiritual sign, ‘the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and of strength, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of holy fear’ (Isaiah 11:2-3) and preserve what you have received. God the Father has signed you, Christ the Lord has confirmed you and given the pledge of the spirit in your hearts, as you learned in the apostolic reading (2 Cor 1:21-22).<sup>39</sup>

Cyril of Jerusalem describes the process of initiation as imitating the saving events in the life of Christ. The prebaptismal anointing unites the initiated with the cross of Christ and the three immersions or submersions in the font reflect Jesus in the tomb three days. After the Baptism, the rite of initiation moves from imitating the passion and burial of Christ to imitating the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan.<sup>40</sup>

As the shape of the initiation rites continues to develop, the Church refines its theology in order to determine the validity and invalidity of the sacraments. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) discusses the question of the “validity” of the sacrament in his response to the Donatist heresy. This heresy teaches that the integrity of the Church is found in the integrity of its members and there is no salvation outside this elect body of believers. The validity of the sacrament is based on the holiness of the minister. According to

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<sup>38</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian I*, 137-40.

<sup>39</sup> Ambrose *The Mysteries* 7:42, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Christian Initiation* (cd), Ch 3 ,#2.

<sup>40</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 94.

Donatus and his followers if the minister of the sacrament is in serious sin, the rite is invalid.<sup>41</sup>

In response to this teaching Augustine argues:

- (1) Any baptism that makes use of the proper element of water and the proper words (i.e. the Trinitarian baptismal interrogation) is “valid”;
- (2) Any sacrament results from “the word... added to the element” and becomes “itself also a kind of visible word” (*Tractates on the Gospel of John* 80.3);
- (3) Since Christ himself then was the true and only minister of baptism, even Judas Iscariot could administer a “valid” sacrament if the proper elements and proper words were used.<sup>42</sup>

The validity of the rite is not dependent on the holiness of minister but on the fact that the rite is celebrated properly. It is the action of God that makes the action valid and not the disposition of the minister. This distinction of Augustine is an important development in sacramental theology. Even Baptisms celebrated by schismatics, like Donatist, are valid even though Augustine does not believe they are “fruitful,” (i.e., that the Baptism is beneficial only if the schismatic returns to true union with the Church).<sup>43</sup>

Besides the question of validity, the time when Baptism is to be celebrated also is an issue for the Church. The teaching of Pelagius about “original sin” focuses on the teaching of the Church regarding infant Baptism. His theological position maintains that human beings have the ability to attain a relationship with God on their own and are not in need of divine assistance. For Pelagius, “original sin” consists mainly in the bad example of Adam’s sin and the integrity of the free will is not affected. Human beings

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<sup>41</sup> Dwyer, *Church History*, 108.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 151.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

are capable of having a right relationship with God on their own power and through their own merits and, as a result, salvation through Jesus Christ is unnecessary.<sup>44</sup>

In responding to Pelagius, Augustine refines his teaching on “original sin” and encourages the practice of infant baptism. Augustine believes that the human will is not free, but sick. This condition prevents people from choosing the good. They are in need of divine grace in order to choose the good. Grace orients one from doing evil to doing what is good and to God who continues to bestow grace for every act. Human nature is corrupt and mortally wounded by sin and is in need of Baptism.<sup>45</sup>

The teaching of Augustine regarding original sin impacts the practice of infant Baptism. While a child may not need cleansing for any personal sin, the child needs to be cleansed of the sin that is “original” as understood by Augustine.<sup>46</sup>

The responses to the teachings of Donatus and Pelagius bring about a “minimalist” approach to Baptism. A loss of liturgical richness and a narrow interpretation of the rites underscore the validity of the sacramental action with the belief that the rite is more concerned with the desire to rid the person of the sin of Adam and has little interest in the rich symbolism of the rite.<sup>47</sup> Even when the practice of infant Baptism gains acceptance the rite concludes with the reception of Eucharist completing initiation.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Dwyer, *Church History*, 113-14.

<sup>45</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 153-54.

<sup>46</sup> Paul Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 9.

<sup>47</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 155-56.

<sup>48</sup> Johnson, 155.

Eventually social and historical circumstances in the West affect how and when the rites take place and who presides at them. Circumstances such as distance from the cathedral church or sickness of a child result in new rites being developed to celebrate the initiation rites in “parts.” Baptism is celebrated at one time with the bishop completing the rites later. By the fourth century, the imposition of the Bishop’s hand on those who had participated in an incomplete initiation rite appears as an independent celebration. This ritual consists of a blessing, a consignation and an invocation of the Holy Spirit. While the entire rite may be completed over a period of time, there is no indication that participation in the Eucharist is denied due to the lack of the imposition of the bishop’s hand.<sup>49</sup> This separation of the rites begins to change the sequence of initiation with completion at the table of the Lord.

While the Bishop is understood as the presider at these rites and the one who imposes the Holy Spirit upon the candidates, social circumstances affect who presides and who is the minister of the rites. With the rise of the Christian faith in the Empire and the continued evangelization of people living in rural areas, the problem of travel to the bishop’s church for the initiation rites becomes difficult for many. This inability of having access to the Sunday Eucharist and the sacraments is addressed by the Church resulting in a new understanding as to the role of the presbyter.<sup>50</sup>

While presbyters are ordained to assist the bishop in the administration of the local church, they now are delegated to preside over local communities when the bishop is not present. To emphasize the unity of these local communities with the cathedral

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<sup>49</sup> Paul Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 3, #13.

<sup>50</sup> Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 73.

church, a fragment of the consecrated bread from the Bishop's cathedral liturgy (*fermentum*) is added to the cup of consecrated wine at the presbyter's rural liturgy as a sign of the unity of the celebration.<sup>51</sup>

As the role of the presbyters develops, there is also a need to define their function regarding the initiation rites. The First Council of Toledo (ca. 400) permits the presbyters to use chrism but insists that only the Bishop can provide it. Pope Innocent I (401-417) allows the presbyter to impose chrism at Baptism, but reserves to the Bishop the anointing on the forehead, the "consigning" or the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. A council held in Vaison-la Romaine in 442 pleads for presbyters to obtain chrism from their own Bishop, fearful that their connection with the local Bishop would be lost. Pope Gelasius I (492-496) includes prohibitions of presbyters in *Letter 9* from making their own chrism, saying the prayers reserved for the Bishop and "applying episcopal consignation" which is distinguished from the anointing that is imposed after baptism in Rome.<sup>52</sup>

Because the Bishop is unable to be present for the entire Rite of Initiation, two approaches to the problem evolve. In the East, presbyters are sent out from the Bishop with the authority to celebrate the entire initiation process and allows for the full celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil. Unfortunately, this decision does not provide for the presence of the Bishop at most celebrations of initiation.<sup>53</sup>

In the West, presbyters begin the initiation process with the celebration of Baptism. The Bishop continues to confirm and to admit candidates to Holy Eucharist

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid..

<sup>52</sup> Paul Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 3, #15.

<sup>53</sup> Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 73.

when the he is available. In this way, the Bishop is able to be present for at least part of the initiation process. The disadvantage of this policy is that there develops a “gap” of time delaying the completion of the initiation rites.<sup>54</sup>

With Baptisms being celebrated in emergency situations, this sacrament begins to be seen as the only one required for salvation. As long as a person is baptized, the importance of receiving the other sacraments of initiation is diminished.<sup>55</sup>

During this period the term “confirmation” refers to the chrismation by the Bishop in a postbaptismal rite because Baptism has been presided over by one other than the Bishop due to fear of death, distance from the cathedral or because one is in an heretical sect. The rite affirms or “confirms” the Baptism by another and does not refer to the hand laying or anointing bestowed by the Bishop at the cathedral.<sup>56</sup>

## II. The Sixth and Seventh Century

As the established pattern for initiation of Baptism, anointing, and Eucharist is celebrated in one unified rite, rituals become more elaborate. The prayers and the rubrics of the Baptismal order continue to reflect the meaning of these rites. They are written with the presumption that these rites are celebrated in the presence of the Bishop and do not always reflect these rites as presided over by a presbyter.<sup>57</sup>

The document *Order 11* presents the ritual as celebrated in the presence of the Bishop. He does not baptize each candidate but is assisted by the deacon and the

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>55</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 10.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 13.

presbyter. The presbyter gives the first anointing on the top of the head. The Bishop in the anointing with oils “confirms” the Baptism celebrated by the presbyter.<sup>58</sup>

The *Gregorian Sacramentary* also provides texts for these rites. The prayer the Bishop uses as he anoints with chrism asks God to send the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit on the newly baptized and to “consign” them with the cross of eternal life:

Almighty eternal God, who have deigned to give rebirth to these your servants and your handmaidens by water and the Holy Spirit, and who gave them forgiveness of all their sins, send onto them the sevenfold Spirit, your holy paraclete, from the heavens, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety. Fill them with spirit of fear of the Lord and kindly assign them with the sign of the cross for eternal life. Through Christ our Lord.<sup>59</sup>

The preferred days for initiation continue to be Easter and Pentecost. When the Bishop is present, the usual sequence of the rites is followed. Other conditions militate against this sequence and change when and how Baptism is celebrated.<sup>60</sup> Days are chosen because of a particular feast or a festival in a region. The day of initiation may also vary because of the difficulty of traveling from the cathedral.<sup>61</sup> This expansion of the day of Baptism begins to draw away the significance of the initiation celebrated on either Easter or Pentecost.

When Baptism is understood to be the primary sacrament for salvation, it affects the practice of infants receiving Eucharist. Pseudo-Dionysius favors the practice of

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<sup>58</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 4, #2.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> The Council of Braga (572) criticizes presbyters who charge peasants for services which may cause people to defer baptism. Gregory the Great (590-604) permits an alternate date for baptism. He writes to Protector Fantius in May of 598 that it is not necessary for Jewish converts to wait till the following Easter and encourages the bishop to baptize them. See Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 4, #3.

<sup>61</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 13.

delaying Eucharist for infants, allowing for instruction beforehand since infants are unable to understand what they are receiving and are unable to make a profession of faith before reception of Eucharist.<sup>62</sup> This desire for candidates to have sufficient knowledge before the reception of Eucharist continues to affect the age for reception. The Council of Toledo (675) questions whether persons should receive when they are sick or do not have a full understanding of what is received.<sup>63</sup>

A consequence of the growing belief that only Baptism is necessary for salvation is that reception of Eucharist becomes non-essential. It becomes necessary for the Church to legislate the obligation of the faithful to receive Eucharist periodically.<sup>64</sup>

A further development in the initiation rites is found in a seventh century Pentecost homily attributed to Eusebius "Gallicanus" that distinguishes Confirmation from Baptism. Until this time "confirmation" is used to define both the anointing the bishop gives the newly baptized and the anointing later given to those previously baptized by other ministers. This homily distinguishes between Baptism and

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<sup>62</sup> "As you say, it seems not undeservedly worthy of laughter among secular people, that infants who are also unable to understand because of their age, become partakers of the divine regeneration and of the most sacred mysteries of divine Eucharist, that bishops instruct those who are unable to listen, and that they pass on the holy traditions in vain to those not understanding. No less ridiculous is it that others pronounce the renunciations and sacred professions for them" –Pseudo-Dionysius *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7:3, 11, Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 4, #3.

<sup>63</sup> "Those of the faithful constrained by any unavoidable illness, who vomit the Eucharist they have received, undergo no ecclesiastical condemnation. Nor does the threat of some punishment affect those who do so at the time on infancy, or who are placed in a certain remoteness of mind that they seem not to know what they do." –Council of Toledo XI (675) 11, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 4, #3.

<sup>64</sup> "The laity who do not receive Eucharist on Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are not believed to be Catholic, nor are they regarded among Catholics."—Council of Agde (506) 18, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 4, #8.



Confirmation. The homilist<sup>65</sup> argues that Baptism offers life, cleansing, and new innocence while Confirmation offers an increase of strength to fight the spiritual battles of life. Previously the word “confirm” only refers to the legislative act of confirming one who has been baptized by another minister. Now the same word “confirmation” has a theological connotation in that this sacrament strengthens or confirms the believer with the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that since candidates are initiated from infancy to adulthood, Confirmation does not depend on the age of the person.<sup>66</sup> Isidore sees Baptism as being for the forgiveness of sins with chrismation as the consecration of the person with the Spirit. He notes that the initiation ritual contains an imposition of hands and an anointing:

Thus the Holy Spirit promises the future purification of this baptism through the same prophet (Ezekiel 36:24)...The figure of this earlier tabernacle (Ex 30:23) is introduced as a type of the church. Every kind of its peoples is anointed in witness of the sanctity which was prefigured through the whole company of works. In this way all anointed with the oil of sacred chrism may be sanctified, and having been sanctified they may be prepared for the glory of God.<sup>67</sup>

Before this time Confirmation refers to the affirmation by the bishop of one's Baptism or status as a Christian. It now signifies the strengthening of the baptized person to face the trials of life through the bestowal of the gift of the Spirit. There is support for both interpretations of the word *confirmation* found in sources like the New Testament

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<sup>65</sup> This homily appears in a seventh-century collection under the pseudonym of Eusebius “Gallicanus” See Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 4, #3.

<sup>66</sup> Eusebius Gallicanus, “Homily” 29:1f, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 4, #3.

<sup>67</sup> Isidore, *On the Catholic Faith Before the Jews* 2:24, 13; 25,2, See Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 3, #9.

and contemporary writings such as Ambrose when speaking of the activity of the Holy Spirit within the community.<sup>68</sup>

With the development of the meaning of the second anointing (confirmation), the issue arises as to the roles of Bishops and presbyters regarding the imposition of this anointing. Presbyters are assuming the role of the minister of the postbaptismal anointing which eliminates the need for the Bishop. While this is not approved by Rome, it continues in different regions of the Church causing the need for Bishops to reassert their role as the ordinary minister of the anointing.<sup>69</sup>

There begins to be a struggle about the roles of the Bishop and presbyter regarding the second anointing.<sup>70</sup> Rome continues to emphasize that this anointing is reserved to the Bishop as the ordinary minister of the rites.<sup>71</sup>

At this time of the Church, the preeminence of Baptism takes “center stage” as the sacrament necessary for salvation, placing less importance on the anointing and the reception of Eucharist. Infants are still baptized and receiving Eucharist but its reception becomes less frequent.

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<sup>68</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> While the Council of Orange in Gaul permits presbyters to anoint returning heretics the Council of Paris (573) reaffirms the bishop as the ordinary minister of the anointing. Italy reserves the ministry of anointing to bishops but still permits some presbyters to continue the practice. Gregory the Great in one letter reaffirms that presbyters should not anoint the baptized on the head with chrism. They are to anoint the chest and leave the forehead for the bishop. He prefers that the two anointings of the Roman baptismal tradition remain distinct. In Sardinia, bishops adopt a solution being used in remote areas: they allow the presbyter to consign the forehead of those they baptize eliminating the need for the bishop. In 619 the Council of Seville rules that presbyters are not permitted to sign the forehead with chrism, nor impose hands and pray for the Holy Spirit thus restricting confirmation to the bishop. Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 4, #9.

<sup>71</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 15.

An important development regarding Confirmation takes place at this time. The anointing understood as confirming the Baptism previously celebrated by either a deacon or presbyter now has a theological meaning that states the Spirit bestowed strengthens the candidate for the trials of life. Confirmation continues to be delayed until the Bishop is able to be present to complete the initiation sacraments. Since baptized children are not taken to the Bishop for anointing, there is a need for legislative action regarding the roles of Bishops and presbyters and the Confirmation anointing.

### III. The Middle Ages

Just as it is impossible to understand the liturgical developments of the fourth and fifth centuries without paying attention to the “conversion” of Constantine, so it is true with this period with the influence of the Carolingian Reform.<sup>72</sup> Charlemagne becomes king of the Franks in 768 and rules until his death in 814. It is during his reign that the union of the papacy and the Church of the Franks is solidified when the Lombards are defeated in 774. After his victory, he assumes control over northern Italy and gives authority to the Pope over southern Italy. He later conquers the Saxons (777) and orders them to become Christian.<sup>73</sup> Under Charlemagne, Baptism holds political significance. The Baptism of the conquered Saxons reflects submission to Frankish rule and failure to accept Baptism results in death.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 177.

<sup>73</sup> John C. Dwyer. *Church History*, 149-150.

<sup>74</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 16.

Christianity flourishes under Charlemagne with learning and the arts. With this cultural renaissance and governmental unification, there is also the standardization of sacramentaries and orders of service.<sup>75</sup> These sacramentaries give a glimpse as to the order followed for the initiation rites.

Although Bishops share the ministry of Baptism with presbyters, the order of service indicates that the Bishop presides over Baptism at the cathedral church following the conventional sequence of the rites of Baptism, anointing, and Eucharist.<sup>76</sup> The *Gelasian Sacramentary* (750?) documents liturgical patterns used for these rites. At the Easter Vigil, candidates are anointed first by the presbyter and then by the Bishop, who imposes hands and prays the prayer of the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>77</sup>

In some documents,<sup>78</sup> the term “to confirm” refers to the action of receiving Eucharist from the cup. During the Carolingian era, “confirming” symbolizes the actions that include the imposition of the Bishop’s hand and the reception of Eucharist from the cup.<sup>79</sup>

As to the order of the rites, texts describe the common sequence as Baptism, anointing, and Eucharist which include infants.<sup>80</sup> The Easter Vigil continues to be the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>77</sup> *Gelasian Sacramentary* 449-452; 592. Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 5, #1.

<sup>78</sup> *Order I*, the oldest surviving description of papal liturgy said that deacon “confirmed” when he offered Eucharist from goblets and pitchers. Acolytes did the same in *Order 23* as compiled by a German author familiar with the liturgy of Rome. Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 5, #1.

<sup>79</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 17.

<sup>80</sup> *Order 30 B* (780) from northwest France, the *Gelasian Sacramentary of Gellone* (790-800), The *Auton Sacramentary* (ca. 800), *Order 28* (ca. 800) indicate this order for the celebration of initiation with Confirmation prior to the candidates receiving Eucharist. Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 5, #1.

ordinary time for the celebration of the initiation rites and the Bishop presides at these rites during which he anoints the newly baptized who also receive Eucharist.<sup>81</sup> When the presbyter baptizes and the Bishop is not present, Confirmation continues to be delayed until the Bishop is able to preside.<sup>82</sup>

The question regarding the validity of the sacrament again is raised by Alcuin when many adult Saxons are forced to be baptized. In letters<sup>83</sup> to Charlemagne, he states that the Baptism of infants is acceptable when sponsors speak for the children but questions whether anything is accomplished in the Baptisms of adults without internal formation.<sup>84</sup>

The issue as to who is the proper minister for Confirmation continues to be discussed. Councils expect Bishops to travel throughout their dioceses each year to conduct the ritual for those previously baptized.<sup>85</sup> Even though those baptized by presbyters are urged to go to the Bishop for Confirmation, some believe that Baptism by the presbyter is sufficient. In northern Italy, the eighth-century Baptismal traditions are recorded in the *Order of Scrutinies*. Manuscripts, which date from the eleventh century, indicate that the presbyter anoints the heads of the candidates with chrism and gives them Eucharist, thus eliminating the role of the Bishop in the rites.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 17.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>83</sup> "Letter" 110, "Letter" 113, Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 5, #1.

<sup>85</sup> "Letter to Cuthbert" from Boniface (ca. 680-ca. 754) requires bishops to visit their diocese once a year to confirm and teach. Charlemagne (769) repeats Boniface's directive in urges bishops to visit parishes once a year. The Council of Chelsea (787) asks bishops to make confirmation available to those baptized by other ministers. See Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 5, #10.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

The *Old Gallican Missal*, the *Bobbio Missal*, and the *Gothic Missal*, which appear in and around Gaul during the seventh and eighth centuries, do not mention the role of the Bishop, the imposition of hands, or the invocation of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit, but do include an anointing on the crown of the head by the presbyter. The *Old Gallican Missal* states that the anointing follows the Baptism and is before the washing of the feet of the newly baptized and it does not mention the reception of Eucharist. It urges the newly baptized to receive Eucharist during the coming week.<sup>87</sup>

The *Stowe Missal* that is compiled in Ireland (792-812) describing the Baptismal rites over which a presbyter presides. The presbyter anoints both on the crown of the head and forehead and then gives Eucharist. This early Baptismal liturgy from the British Islands does not specify a time of year for Baptism, the role of the Bishop in either anointing or imposing hands, or the prayer for the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>88</sup> These missals indicate the evolution of practices taking place regarding the celebration of these rites and the prominence of the presbyter as presiding minister eliminating the role of Bishop as pastor of the people.

Several pontificals are published containing prayers and rubrics used by the Bishop that follow the normal sequence of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and are an integral rite of the liturgies that take place at Easter and Pentecost in the cathedral church. Invocations in the celebration of Confirmation begin to appear but the instruction for the Bishop to impose hands disappears in favor of chrismation.<sup>89</sup> A version of the

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., Ch. 6, #1.

*Gregorian Sacramentary* invites older children to place a foot on the foot of their godparent for Confirmation, a gesture that in time gives way to the placement of the sponsor's hand on the candidate's shoulder.<sup>90</sup>

Even though the Church calls for the conventional sequence of initiation rites on Easter and Pentecost there are provisions made for the deferral of Confirmation when the Bishop is not present.<sup>91</sup> Some call for the rites to be celebrated in a different sequence for cases such as illness when the presbyter baptizes and concludes the rite with Eucharist.<sup>92</sup> Liturgical books are developed allowing for the presbyter as well as the Bishop to preside at these rites resulting in two sequences of rites being developed for these rites.<sup>93</sup>

The debate as to what sacrament(s) is necessary for salvation continues among theologians. Paschasius Radbertus states that one receives eternal life when one is baptized and does not receive Eucharist.<sup>94</sup> Deacon Florus of Lyons (840-52) argues the same when he collects the writings of Augustine on the letters of St. Paul and adds his own insights giving support to Baptism as the necessary sacrament for salvation.<sup>95</sup> Rabanus Maurus posits the need for Eucharist for eternal life and Riculf of Soissons

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., See the citation from the *Reichenau Sacramentary*.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., Ch. 6 # 2, The Council of Paris VI (829), the Council of Meaux- Paris (845), a homily of Pope Leo IV (847-55), Archbishop Herard of Tours (858), and the Council of Worms (868) all state that Baptism takes place on Easter and Pentecost. They all permit other occasions by way of exception: danger of death, sickness, or necessity.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., Ch 6, #1.

<sup>93</sup> Throughout this period, versions of the *Gregorian Sacramentary* and its supplement are transmitted, adapted, and copied for different regions instructing bishops to confirm newly baptized and instructing presbyters to defer Confirmation and offer Eucharist. Ibid., Ch. 6, #4.

<sup>94</sup> Paschasius Radbertus, *The Body and Blood of the Lord* 19, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 6, #7.

<sup>95</sup> Florus of Lyons in *Augustinian Commentary on the Letters of Paul*, quoted in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 6 #7.

establishes statutes for the presbyters with instructions to offer Eucharist to the baptized for their salvation.<sup>96</sup> The differing of opinion regarding the necessity of Eucharist for salvation indicates that the Eucharist at Baptism is not universally accepted.<sup>97</sup>

Issues such as to who presides at the initiation rites and the growing practice of deferring Eucharist and Confirmation to a later time affect the proper sequence of the rites and their importance in the life of the Church.<sup>98</sup> Compounding the situation is the fact that Bishops fail to visit the diocese every year to complete the initiation rites resulting in many people not being confirmed.<sup>99</sup>

Pastoral issues continue to affect the timing and the celebrations of the rites of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist that characterize the period before the Reformation. In the period between the *Roman-Germanic Pontifical* (965) and the council of Lateran IV (1215), there is relative prosperity and cultural revival among civilizations bringing people more in contact with one another. This period also sees the growing central authority of the papacy with the reforms of Gregory VII producing an atmosphere wherein the rites of initiation are adjusted to address practical pastoral concerns.<sup>100</sup>

While some directives regarding sequence of the rites of initiation place Confirmation with Baptism, the actual celebration of Confirmation depends on when the Bishop can preside. The tradition of the Bishop celebrating the entire Initiation Rite continues to be the norm when celebrated at the Easter Vigil. When the Bishop is not

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 21-22.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 24.



present, the presbyter baptizes and offers Eucharist but Confirmation is delayed until the Bishop is present.<sup>101</sup> The texts used during this period encourage the unity of the rites with exceptions allowing for the deferral of Confirmation.<sup>102</sup>

Besides the delaying of Confirmation, the infrequency of receiving Eucharist becomes a concern for theologians and Church leaders. While the practice of giving Eucharist to children to infants and children<sup>103</sup> continues, some believe that it is not necessary. This teaching tends to comfort parents of children who die before receiving Eucharist but it also reflects the growing infrequent reception of Eucharist by people of all ages. Rituals are now written with the omission of Eucharist being celebrated at the time of Baptism.<sup>104</sup> Several theologians assure people that children receive the gift of eternal life even without the reception of Eucharist.<sup>105</sup> This growing practice affects the necessity of Eucharist as a necessary part of the initiation rite resulting in Baptism being celebrated without the Eucharist.<sup>106</sup>

With Baptism being celebrated without Eucharist and the infrequency of people receiving Eucharist, the Church begins to provide catechesis before the reception of the sacraments. The expectation is that catechesis takes place between Baptism and the reception of the other sacraments. This catechesis involves knowledge of the Creed and

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<sup>101</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 7, #1 & 2 discusses the pontificals used at this time in the Church indicating the above pattern throughout civilization.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., Ch.7 #4.

<sup>104</sup> See the rubrics of John of Avranches and the *Cotton Manuscripts* in Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 7 #5.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 26.

the Lord's Prayer.<sup>107</sup> The reception of Eucharist is now based on the knowledge one has regarding the sacrament. This results in belief that this sacrament has a meaning other than that of initiation.<sup>108</sup>

During this same period the time and place for Confirmation is also discussed. One of the duties attributed to the Bishop is the obligation to confirm, but since the celebration takes place depending on the availability of the Bishop, Confirmation is separated from the initiation Liturgy.<sup>109</sup> The later age for Confirmation also allows for a period of catechesis similar to that which takes place before reception of the Eucharist. Theologians begin to encourage an older age for this sacrament. Confirmation is not just an initiation rite but also is a sacrament that strengthens the candidates who survive infancy in order to face the evils of the world.<sup>110</sup>

The sequence of Confirmation and Eucharist begins to vary and the Church supports no preference as to the proper sequence. Confirmation is experienced not as an initiation rite, but as a rite celebrated when the Bishop is available.<sup>111</sup>

Before the period of the Reformation, historical circumstances and Church teaching begin to affect the understanding of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as initiation rites. While there are examples where the proper sequence of these rites is

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<sup>107</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 7 #6.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., Burhard of Worms cites a council at Reims that decrees the need for preparation before Eucharist assuming that knowledge is important.

<sup>109</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 26.

<sup>110</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 7 #8.

<sup>111</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 27.

retained,<sup>112</sup> the sequence is often ignored. These rites begin to lose their meaning as initiation in character.

The development of the concept of the “age of discretion” and moral readiness affect the sequence and the age at which the initiation rites are celebrated. The Fourth Lateran Council (1215), while it does not specify the occasions for Confirmation and Eucharist, decrees that every Christian who reaches the “age of discretion” must confess sins once a year. The term “age of discretion” allows for different interpretations to its meaning. The faithful are asked to fulfill their penance and receive Eucharist during the Easter Season.

All the faithful of either sex, after they have arrived at the years of discretion, should at least once a year faithfully confess all their sins alone to their own priest. They should strive with all their might to fulfill the penance enjoined on them, reverently taking the sacrament of the Eucharist at least at Easter, unless perhaps by the advice of their own priest they are directed that they must abstain from its reception for a time because of some reasonable cause. Otherwise they may be kept from the entrance of the church while they are alive, and be denied a Christian burial when they die.

Council of Lateran IV (1215) 21

While the Council does not require the deferral of Eucharist until the “age of discretion” nor that the confession of sins takes place prior to every Eucharist, it does establish a pattern that does become custom.<sup>113</sup> Once the faithful begin the practice of confessing sins before receiving Eucharist, the Church begins to expect confession even before First Eucharist.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> See Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 8 #1.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., Ch 8 #5.

<sup>114</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 30.

In regard to Confirmation, the Bishop continues the practice of pastoral visits and the celebration of Confirmation. This period also experiences a development of the ritual, the age of reception and the theology for Confirmation.

The *Roman Curia Pontifical* places the rite of Confirmation among the blessings bestowed by the Bishop. It instructs the Bishop to bestow hands on each candidate, a gesture that has been omitted because the anointing with chrism became the focus of the sacrament.<sup>115</sup>

The pontifical of William Durandus suggests that the imposition of hands be extended over all the candidates at one time and the slap be introduced, imitating the ceremony of knighthood and making Confirmation analogous to military service indicating the willingness of one to confess belief in Christ. Other rituals of Durandus suggest that, if the candidate is an infant, the slap be imposed on the godparent.<sup>116</sup>

John of Liege introduces another practice during this period that permits the Bishop, during the rite, to change the name of the person being confirmed. This practice addresses the concern that the original baptismal name may not adequately represent Christian sanctity and virtue.<sup>117</sup>

Up until this period, there is no specific age for confirmation. Candidates are confirmed between infancy and adulthood depending on the availability of the Bishop. Now there is movement to set a specific age for Confirmation.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 8 #10.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 32.

Some argue for retaining an early age for Confirmation. Richard Poore assumes that one is confirmed by the age of five or seven. The Council of Worcester (1240) requires Confirmation within the first year of birth. The Council of Durham (1249) teaches that by the age of seven, children are to be confirmed, while the Synod of Exeter (1287) asks parents to have children confirmed by their third birthdays. The Synod of Winchester (1308) requires Confirmation by age three.<sup>119</sup>

Others propose that Confirmation be conferred in early childhood. A commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard suggests that children are to be confirmed before they enter the battle of the faithful life. Thomas Aquinas suggests that young children receive Confirmation as preparation for the future. Bonaventure says that Confirmation should be celebrated before a child reaches the age of discretion. Albert the Great prefers Confirmation at an age before the candidate reaches sexual maturity.<sup>120</sup>

The Synod of Cologne (1280) fixes the age of Confirmation at seven or older. It is the first authority that chooses this age that eventually becomes canonical.<sup>121</sup>

Presbyters should exhort the parents of those baptized but not yet confirmed that they should bring those seven years of age or older to the bishop, who alone can confirm. Hair hanging long against their foreheads should be clipped. Foreheads should be diligently washed. They should have bands of fine linen cloth without a tear and without a knot, the width of three fingers and a suitable length, white and well cleaned. Excluding the father and the mother, those who have an acquaintance of the children, and who know better whether or not they are or have been confirmed, present them. And on the third day after confirmation they should bring them to the church, and the presbyter should wash their foreheads and burn the bands. The ashes of the bands and the water of washing should be returned to a sacred place or a pool or a washroom. However, those needing to be confirmed, if they are ten years old or older, first must confess to their priests before they may be confirmed. Both the parents of those confirmed and the very

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<sup>119</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 8, #11.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

ones confirmed should call to mind often to themselves when, by whom, and where they were confirmed. No cleric may come to first tonsure unless he has been confirmed first.

Synod of Cologne (1280) 5

Before the celebration of Confirmation, candidates who have reached the age of discretion are asked to confess their sins to the priest. The Synod of Cologne requires confession prior to Confirmation for candidates ten years of age and older and the Synod of Constance requires confession for candidates fourteen years of age and older.<sup>122</sup>

With the development of ritual practices, there is also development regarding the theology of Confirmation. There is a stronger belief that this sacrament provides one with the strength to face the struggles of life. Confirmation is the sacrament to be celebrated after infancy that prepares one to live faithfully the Christian life.<sup>123</sup> William of Melitona (+1245) reflects this view on Confirmation:

The more appropriate time for receiving the sacrament of confirmation is the time of innocence, both because it will effect as the age of adulthood appears, and because of the danger threatening from the increase of death. For if some have been prevented by death from receiving this sacrament, the glory of the excellence of the character of this sacrament will be lessened for them and the parents will bear the guilt...<sup>124</sup>

Thomas Aquinas believes Confirmation offers one the reception of grace at a mature age for the spiritual life.

It is clear that in physical life there is a certain special maturity which a person attains at a mature age and becomes able to perform mature actions of a person... Thus, therefore a person receives spiritual life through baptism, which is

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 32.

<sup>124</sup> William of Melitona, "The Time of Confirmation," Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 8 # 11.

spiritual rebirth. But in confirmation a person receives as it were a certain mature age of spiritual life.<sup>125</sup>

By the middle of the thirteenth century, scholastic theologians no longer consider Confirmation an initiation sacrament. The sacrament is understood as one that brings an increase of grace for the confirmed person preparing for battle with enemies of the faith.<sup>126</sup>

During this time, not all baptized persons are being confirmed. In response, the Council of Oxford (1222), the Council of Trier (1227) the *Provincial Constitutions* of Edmund of Canterbury (ca. 1236), the Council of Valencia (1255), the Council of Bayeux (1300), and the *Constitutions* of Walter Reynolds of Canterbury provide instruction exhorting presbyters to encourage people to be confirmed. In 1281, John Peckham lists Confirmation among the five sacraments that everyone should receive.<sup>127</sup>

As with the reception of Eucharist, there develops the need for catechetical formation in preparation for Confirmation. Parents are asked to prepare their children for Confirmation. Godparents are asked to catechize candidates as to the meaning of the sacrament. Bishops, priests, parents and those being confirmed are asked to cooperate in the preparation process.<sup>128</sup> Still many are never confirmed.<sup>129</sup>

The Church begins to show little interest in following the proper sequence of these sacraments when Confirmation is celebrated apart from Baptism which leads to the

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<sup>125</sup> Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologica* 4: 72, 1. Ibid., Ch 8, #11.

<sup>126</sup> Michael Henchal, *Celebrating Confirmation before First Eucharist* (San Jose, California: Resource Publications, Inc, 2000), 4.

<sup>127</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 8 # 12.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 32.

loss of the place for the anointing between Baptism and Eucharist. It seems that following a particular sequence is of less importance than having the Bishop present for Confirmation.<sup>130</sup>

In certain places, the sequence of the celebration of these sacraments becomes a tool used to encourage reception of Confirmation by the faithful with local churches recommending that Confirmation precede reception of Eucharist. John Peckham in “Constitutions of the Council of Lambeth” urges that one not receive Eucharist, outside danger of death, unless one has been confirmed or reasonably been prevented from the reception of Confirmation.<sup>131</sup>

The shift of theological interpretation as to the meaning of Confirmation, not being an initiation rite in conjunction with Baptism and Eucharist, results in the loss of the meaning of Confirmation as an initiation rite. When this sacrament is seen as a separate rite not connected with the reception of the Spirit at Baptism, it leads to being a unique and self-contained rite.<sup>132</sup>

At this time, two sequences for the rites of initiation coexist. The first is the conventional sequence of Baptism, anointing and Eucharist with the Bishop presiding. The other sequence reflects the absence of the Bishop when a presbyter baptizes an infant and offers Eucharist to the infant. Later, the newly baptized is presented to the Bishop for Confirmation.

The latter part of the tenth century leading up to the Reformation period sees the disintegration of the sequence for the initiation rites and the development of a new

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 8, #13.

<sup>132</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 208.



understanding of Confirmation. Confirmation is separated from Baptism and Eucharist from Baptism. There is the belief that these sacraments are considered individual rites not dependent on each other. This development finds support in several teachings of councils and theologians. Several factors affect the age when Confirmation and Eucharist are celebrated: catechesis before Confirmation and Eucharist, and concepts of “age of discretion” and “age of reason.” While in the early Church these sacraments are celebrated as initiation rites expecting limited preparation or knowledge, this period stresses the need for the individual to have sufficient knowledge before receiving Confirmation or Eucharist.

There is a slow disintegration of the Initiation Sacraments with their proper sequence. Baptism is now understood to be the only sacrament necessary for salvation and Confirmation and Eucharist are no longer regarded as rites of initiation. While many still receive Eucharist, many forgo Confirmation.

On the eve of the Reformation, the rites of Christian Initiation in the Medieval West develop into a sequence of distinct rituals celebrated at intervals according to the proper age of the candidates: Baptism, Penance, Confirmation and Eucharist. While Confirmation becomes the great neglected sacrament and Eucharist is tied increasingly to confession, Baptism is anything but neglected since it is the sacrament necessary for salvation.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

#### IV. The Age of Reform

The Reformation challenges the Church to renew itself and to correct abuses that affect its very life. The Protestant reformers begin to evaluate their belief in the seven sacraments of the Church. The Protestant Reformers (Luther, Calvin, Zwingli), with their strict interpretation of Scripture, begin to stress the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. At the same time, they decide that Confirmation is not a Sacrament of Initiation, relegating it to a celebration at the completion of a catechetical process.<sup>134</sup>

The term “minimalism” is an appropriate term indicating the understanding the Protestant Reformers have about the rites of initiation. Luther, in his treatise on Baptism, *The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism*, reduces the number of sacraments from seven to two based on the scriptural command of Christ to “Go...baptize,” and “Do this in memory of me.” The promise of Christ, that “the one who believes and is baptized will be saved,” and “this is my Body...Blood given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins” is inherited in some ways by all the Protestant Reformers.<sup>135</sup> With the reduction of sacraments from seven to two,<sup>136</sup> the reformers influence Christian Initiation by placing little emphasis on Confirmation as a sacrament and place greater stress on the celebration of First Eucharist.<sup>137</sup> While Confirmation is not recognized as a sacrament, it is now seen as useful ritual that concludes a period of catechesis.<sup>138</sup> The emphasis on

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 227 ff.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 235-36.

<sup>136</sup> This is not universally accepted. Some reform communities continue to claim more than the Sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. See Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 233 ff.

<sup>137</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 36.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

catechesis also affects the Catholic understanding of the time and importance of Confirmation.

Baptism of infants continues to take place in the Church with little reference to either Confirmation or Eucharist. It is rare that the traditional sequence of the Initiation Sacraments is followed, even though the Roman Missal permits the celebration of the rites on Holy Saturday.<sup>139</sup>

It is during this time that the relationship between Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as initiation rites begins to fade and lose meaning since there is now a desire for candidates to have sufficient knowledge before receiving Confirmation and Eucharist. Theologians begin to teach that, before one receives Eucharist, the person should have the intellectual capacity to discern the difference in food and the moral capacity to know right from wrong.<sup>140</sup> The *Roman Catechism* presumes that the custom of infants receiving Eucharist no longer is followed, and that there is catechesis and confession of sins before receiving Eucharist.<sup>141</sup>

Regarding Confirmation, the consensus at this time suggests that it not be celebrated before the age of seven in order that there be a period of catechesis. Some even suggest that Confirmation (like Eucharist) should be coupled with the confession of sins.<sup>142</sup> Because of the importance of catechesis and proper understanding by the

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<sup>139</sup>Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 34-35.

<sup>140</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 9 #3.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., Ch 9 #6.

candidates before reception of Confirmation and Eucharist, there is less emphasis on the belief that these are initiation rites having a dependency on Baptism.<sup>143</sup>

Confirmation is now understood as one of the blessings given by the Bishop. It becomes an occasion for catechesis on the faith, on prayers and on proper moral behavior. It is not about initiation but about formation and education.<sup>144</sup>

It is ironic that the Catholic Church adopts a similar method for the administration and reception of Confirmation as that of the Protestant Reformers. Both continue to baptize at an early age and then catechize in preparation for “confirmation” or for another similar type of rite.<sup>145</sup>

## V. The Seventeenth thru Nineteenth Centuries

Infant Baptism is the norm for the Western Church without the celebration of Confirmation or Eucharist. The importance of infant Baptism becomes so great that many children are even baptized at home. Baptism now is seen as the one sacrament necessary for salvation.<sup>146</sup>

The practice that develops in the sixteenth century is that one not be confirmed before the age of seven and that Confirmation be celebrated at a later age. An encyclical

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Johnson, *Rites of Christian Initiation*, 288.

<sup>146</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 10 #1.

by Benedict XIV in 1742 mandates catechesis before the reception of Confirmation.<sup>147</sup>

This mandate further cements catechesis as the basis for the reception of Confirmation.

The expectation of catechesis influences the age for reception of Eucharist.

Young people are expected to complete a period of catechesis that includes the meaning of the Eucharist and moral development with the confession of sins before Eucharist.<sup>148</sup>

The reception of Eucharist is often delayed until the age of eleven or twelve distancing it even further from Confirmation and Baptism.

At the time that Benedict mandates catechesis in preparation for Confirmation, he also mandates the ancient practice of laying the hand upon the head of the candidate at the same time the person is anointed. This practice continues in practice until the reform of the rite of Confirmation following Vatican II.<sup>149</sup>

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, little attention is given to the sequence for the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist. At this time there begins a debate as to the proper time for the reception of Confirmation. The *Instructions du Rituel de Toulon* of 1748 states that children being presented for Confirmation are to be properly prepared and they are to be confirmed only after receiving First Eucharist. As a result, not only is Confirmation separated from Baptism due to the lack of the Bishop's presence and the need for catechesis, but, now its reception would be determined on the fulfillment of proper catechesis before reception of Eucharist.<sup>150</sup> While this decision is not sanctioned by Rome, it does receive widespread acceptance in France.

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., Ch 10, #4.

<sup>148</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 39.

<sup>149</sup> Henchal, *Celebrating Confirmation Before First Eucharist*, 5.

In 1751 the synodal constitutions of Saint-Paul-Trois-Chateaux prefers to have Confirmation follow First Eucharist using Charles Borromeo as its basis for support:

Since experience teaches us that children who, shortly after their reason has been developed, possess enough evil to sin and do not appear to have enough reflection and principles of religion to form contrition for their sins (which usually results from poor education), we declare that ordinarily we will only administer confirmation to those who have received First Eucharist or will be capable of making it after having been confirmed. This was the practice of St. Charles as can be seen in his instructions on confirmation (in Noel Alexander's *Dogmatic and Moral Theology*, 1:325). He has also warned in other instructions (ibid.) that one should not present oneself to receive it without permission before the age of twelve years (3:3, 2).<sup>151</sup>

Confirmation is now understood in reference to the confession of sins rather than Baptism. Discussions and policies regarding the sequence of Confirmation and Eucharist begin to take place.

By the late eighteenth century, catechetical preparation for the reception of the sacraments become more fully developed allowing further voices to be heard regarding the proper sequence.<sup>152</sup> The catechetical formation for Confirmation is perceived as preparing candidates to live the Christian life.<sup>153</sup>

Since Confirmation is celebrated around the "age of discretion" (reason) and Eucharist follows later, both begin to lose their "connection" with Baptism. Confirmation is understood as having more of a relationship with the Sacrament of Penance than Baptism since it is received only after proper catechesis when one is morally prepared to live the Christian life.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> *Synodal Ordinances of Saint-Paul-Trois-Chateaux*, Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 10 #8.

<sup>152</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 11, Introduction.

<sup>153</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation*, 42.

The question of sequence continues to be an issue in some parts of the Church. Some councils, bishops and texts suggest that Eucharist should precede Confirmation. The councils of Tours (1849), Avignon (1849), Sens (1850), Rouen (1850), among others support the idea that Eucharist should be received before Confirmation. The reasons for this sequence are the reception of more abundant graces from the sacrament, the piety of the children, being able to remember the event, sufficient instruction, the completion of religious education and local traditions.<sup>155</sup>

Bishop Mannay (1802-16) of France suggests that the Trier practice of following the sequence of Confirmation and Eucharist be abolished in favor of Confirmation following Eucharist. In the catechetical manual of 1868, Felix Dupanloup reports that some parishes are offering Confirmation on the same day as First Eucharist and he argues that a period of time should separate these rituals, whether it is one day or several years. All the same, Confirmation should follow Eucharist to provide the sacrament a proper celebration.<sup>156</sup>

While there is a growing movement to change the sequence, it is not universally accepted. Rome strongly advocates the traditional sequence and Leo XIII encourages the proper sequence of Confirmation before First Eucharist. In a pastoral letter of 1897 to Bishop Robert of Marseilles, he argues that delaying Confirmation does not conform to the practice, intent, or the advantage of the Church:

Since the custom which had grown in almost every age was repealed, it behooved you to introduce into the your diocese that children should receive the Christian

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch. 11, #9.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

sacrament of confirmation, anointed with renewing chrism, before they may be refreshed with the divine banquet of the Eucharist. You have desired that it be indicated to you whether this is approved by us. It pleases us to write to you with no intermediary about this very important matter and about the opinion which we are to reveal. We therefore praise your proposal to the greatest extent. For that opinion which had grown strong there and in other places correspond neither to the old and constant intent of the church, nor to the advantage of the faithful.<sup>157</sup>

The discussion of the sequence for reception of Confirmation before Eucharist is not based on the Tradition of the Church but on custom. There is no reference made as to the relationship Confirmation has to Baptism.<sup>158</sup>

This period of history is also marked by the call for catechesis in preparation for receiving Confirmation and Eucharist. These sacraments become catechetical moments in the person's life that are as "stepping stones" preparing the person to live the life of Christ in the world. Besides receiving catechetical preparation, the moral development of the person is part of the preparation for reception of these sacraments. The person needs to be of the age of discernment (reason) capable of understanding right from wrong. These sacraments begin to have more of a relationship with Penance than Baptism.

## VI. The Church of Today

The Church today continues to wrestle with issues regarding the Sacraments of Initiation and the proper sequence as to their celebration. Unfortunately, even with direction from Church documents these issues are still not resolved.

Pope Pius X in the document *Quam singulari* (1910) decrees the lowering of the age for reception of First Eucharist to the "age of discretion" which is defined as the age

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<sup>157</sup> Leo XIII *Abrogata quae*, 22 June 1897, Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 11, #9.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.



of seven or younger.<sup>159</sup> This document states that the use of reason should be understood as that time when the person has the ability of distinguishing ordinary bread from the Eucharist. Parents are the ones who are to determine when a child has reached the age of reason and the pastor should not have much input into determining the readiness of the person for First Eucharist.<sup>160</sup> Pius makes the point that First Eucharist does not belong at the end of a child's catechetical formation but at a time when the child can receive it fruitfully. While *Quam singulari* seems only concerned about the time for Eucharist, it also affects the time of the celebration of Confirmation.<sup>161</sup>

The "age of reason" as the determining factor for a person to receive First Eucharist becomes part of the Code of Canon Law in 1917, settling the age at seven.<sup>162</sup> The determining factors of readiness for Eucharist center on preparation that is geared to younger children who are beginning their catechetical instruction.

While a set age is advanced for Eucharist, the Church does not advocate a single age for Confirmation. This omission results in various options for the age of Confirmation to multiply.<sup>163</sup>

At first, the variance regarding the age of Confirmation seems slight, but in time there are multiple opinions regarding the proper age. The 1917 Code of Canon Law asserts that Confirmation should be celebrated when the Bishop visits, approximately

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 12, #2.

<sup>161</sup> Henchal, *Celebrating Confirmation Before First Eucharist*, 5.

<sup>162</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 12, #2.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

every five years. Since seven is the normal age for the sacrament, the code ranges the age from seven to twelve. While the set age is seven for the sacrament, the celebration at a later age is termed “deferred” until the Bishop is available.<sup>164</sup>

In 1932, the Sacred Congregation for the Sacraments would state that the nature of Confirmation demands that children not receive Eucharist until after being confirmed. As late as 1952, the Commission for Interpreting the Code of Canon Law states that local Bishops do not have the option of deferring Confirmation until a person reaches the age of ten.<sup>165</sup> It seems that Roman authorities, in the early decades of the twentieth century, have a clear understanding that Confirmation is to be celebrated at “the age of reason” before First Eucharist.<sup>166</sup>

While Church authority seems consistent regarding the sequence of the Sacraments of Initiation, it is left up to the local authority to order the sequence for these sacraments. Often for “pastoral reasons”, the directive to follow the proper sequence is ignored and Confirmation is understood as a rite of adulthood and maturity and begins to overshadow Baptism when one assumes adult responsibilities in the Church as an adolescent.<sup>167</sup> The belief that one decides to live the life of faith becomes integral to the meaning of Confirmation.

The second half of the twentieth century witnesses unprecedented change with the recovery and renewal of Christian Initiation with its implications for churches throughout the world. In response to the mandate of the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of the

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid., Ch 12, #6.

<sup>165</sup> Henchal, *Celebrating Confirmation Before First Eucharist*, 5.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 300-01.

Second Vatican Council, the rites of Baptism and Confirmation are revised so that they are symbolic of Christian initiation.<sup>168</sup> To emphasize the unity of Baptism and Confirmation, the Fathers of the Council include the renewal of Baptismal promises in the rite of Confirmation to emphasize the initiation character of the sacrament.<sup>169</sup>

While there is a desire to show the unity of these Sacraments of Initiation, the Council does not mandate an age for the celebration of Confirmation and allows each conference of bishops to decide the age when it is to be celebrated and what sequence is to be followed.<sup>170</sup> Confirmation is now celebrated at different ages and often after Eucharist and begins to take on the meaning for some as a rite of Christian commitment.<sup>171</sup>

In 1972, the restoration of the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA) raises again the question regarding the proper sequence for the initiation rites and the meaning of Confirmation. The RCIA reinstates the traditional order of the Sacraments of Initiation that is to be followed not only for adults but also for children who have reached the age of reason and are entering the Church.<sup>172</sup> This restored rite emphasizes Confirmation as an initiation rite and not a rite of maturity or Christian commitment.

It may be asked why is there still confusion as to the proper sequence of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist and understanding Confirmation as

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<sup>168</sup> Johnson, *The Rites of Christian Initiation*, 291.

<sup>169</sup> Turner, *Ages of Initiation* (cd), Ch 12, #6.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Henchal, *Celebrating Confirmation Before First Eucharist*, 6.

an initiation rite? The answer may be found in the fact that each conference of bishops determines the age for Confirmation and, in turn, the sequence of their celebration and the choosing of a more mature age for Confirmation are based on the need of catechetical formation.<sup>173</sup>

As we enter the twenty-first century, there is no set sequence for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist in the United States. There also different understandings of the meaning of Confirmation. For some, it is understood as a time of maturity, the time when one decides to live out the faith in the Catholic Church. For others, especially those who enter the Church through the RCIA process, it is understood as an initiation rite that is not determined by catechesis.

The call for the renewal of these sacraments by Vatican II does seem to encourage the return to the proper sequence and the understanding of these sacraments as initiation rites. While the restoration of the RCIA seems to be a catalyst for a return to the proper sequence, this does not seem to be happening. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are often celebrated as separate rites with little reference to one another. This may be because these sacraments are celebrated years apart and Confirmation and Eucharist are often celebrated at the conclusion of catechetical formation.

There seem to exist in the Church two meanings of Confirmation. One is that it is an initiation rite, celebrated at the Easter Vigil. The other meaning is the one of a Protestant view that Confirmation is about adulthood, maturity and the completion of catechetical training. Since some understand Baptism as the rite in which one is initiated into the Church, the need to be confirmed is diminished resulting in many never celebrating Confirmation.

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

## VII. Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the development of the celebrations and sequence of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This overview sketches the development of the initiation process in the Western Church that moves from one unified celebration of Baptism, anointing, and Eucharist to three celebrations taking place over a period of years.

This overview also shows that the sequence of the celebrations is not always maintained as originally designed. Whether due to the availability of the Bishop to preside or because of political situations or due to theological insights or a desire for catechesis, the proper sequence for these celebrations is lost and the result is no set sequence for these sacraments in the Church today.

With the loss of one unified celebration of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist and the evolving of these sacraments celebrated over a period of time and in different sequences there has resulted the fact that these rites are not understood as signifying initiation into the Church. This loss of meaning, as stated in the Introduction of this paper, leads to understanding these sacraments as individual rites with specific theological meaning.

Confirmation is most affected by the change of sequence. What should be understood as a sacrament that completes Baptism leading to Eucharist, takes on the character of being a rite of maturity. The result is that there now are two understandings regarding the meaning of Confirmation. One is about initiation and the other is about maturity. The sequence that is followed defines how the Confirmation is understood. Many are not confirmed because this sacrament may be perceived as not being important

in the life of the believer.

Even though Church documents and councils stress that Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are initiation rites and have a proper sequence that should be followed, conferences of Bishops are allowed to choose other sequences. This leads to ambiguity regarding the meaning of these rites.

With the renewal of the sacraments mandated by Vatican II and the emphasis on these sacraments as initiation rites that are completed with the reception of Eucharist, the Church is encouraging a return to the tradition that celebrates these rites as ones of initiation. The only way to recapture this tradition is to implement the Restored Order, so that experiencing these rites in their proper sequence, people can understand them as entrance rites into the Church that continues to form its people throughout their lives.

Come to the table! So goes the invitation. This invitation is not any ordinary one. It is one that invites people to share at the "table of the Lord." At this sacred table, all are united as washed in the waters of life and anointed with Spirit. It is at this table that the baptized become part of the community of believers continually formed by the Word of God and fed with the body and blood of Christ. Once nourished at the table, believers go forth into the world as a community that continues the work of Christ that brings salvation to all people. For the early Church, as it should be today, the Table of the Lord is the place where initiation into the Church is completed. The Restored Order encourages all to rediscover the meaning of these rites and the significance of this holy table.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Implementation of the Restored Order**

Two processes are used to implement the Restored Order in Holy Cross Parish. The first is a process of formation for the parish staff, catechists and the parish community. The second is the process to prepare families with candidates for the reception of Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist entitled *Children of Light*. Both of these processes are described in this chapter.

#### **A. Process of Preparation for the Staff, Catechists and Parish**

##### **1. Consultation**

In order to prepare the parish for the implementation of the Restored Order, a consultation process is initiated with key individuals and groups to receive their insights regarding the Restored Order. The parish pastoral staff, catechists teaching in the parish grade school and PSR program, and the parish pastoral council are part of the consultation process.

##### **a. Staff**

After applying to be part of the “pilot” study on the Restored Order established by Bishop Anthony M. Pilla in 2000, Ms. Joyce Kelleher of the Office of Catechetical Services meets with the parish staff to explain the qualifications to be part of the study.<sup>1</sup> At this meeting it is determined that Holy Cross parish meets the requirements to be part of the “pilot” study.

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix A, 117.

The second part of the consultation process for the staff is a presentation on the Sacraments of Initiation and the possible ramifications that implementing this process may have on the parish. The Staff members discuss their own understanding of the Sacraments of Initiation and especially Confirmation in their own lives and how the “movement” of the sacrament to the time of First Eucharist may impact the parish. The discussion indicates that for most of the Staff, Confirmation means maturity and knowledge that prepares candidates to be strong Catholics. The whole concept of initiation is new concept regarding Confirmation. While there is no resistance to the Restored Order, some voice concern as to whether it may be difficult to implement it in the parish.

There are two concerns that some members of the Staff have regarding the Restored Order which center on Confirmation. The first is whether second graders are mature enough to understand this sacrament. The second is the fear that young people will become inactive Catholics. There is the belief that having Confirmation later keeps people closer to the Church at least until they are confirmed. These two concerns also become issues for other consultative groups.

The Staff decides that two steps should take place before implementing the Restored Order. First is the development of a strategic plan to be used in implementing the Restored Order.<sup>2</sup> This plan is to be sent to the diocese for approval and becomes the instrument used throughout the consultation process. Second, before implementation of the Restored Order, there needs to be a process of education for the entire parish on the Restored Order.

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<sup>2</sup> Appendix A, 118-20.



### **b. Catechists**

Formation for the reception of sacraments is parish-based at Holy Cross which catechists and teachers in both the day school and religious education program (PSR) support in their own educational settings. It is vital that the catechists and teachers understand and support the Restored Order. Sessions are held with these catechists to explain the Restored Order, to discuss the history of Sacrament of Confirmation and to share the strategic plan developed by the Staff. These sessions become “focus groups” where participants share their own experiences about the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist and discuss how these insights impact the Restored Order.

The catechists have similar concerns that members of the Staff have regarding Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist. These concerns center on candidates’ knowledge and maturity for Confirmation. There also is the concern regarding the involvement of young people in the life of the Church and the fear that many may not continue living the faith in the Church if Confirmation is celebrated at an earlier age.

### **c. Parish Pastoral Council**

The support of the Parish Pastoral Council for the Restored Order is vital for the implementation of the Restored Order. Members of Council have a leadership role in the parish and represent the voice of the parishioners. The Restored Order is an agenda item for three meetings held by Council.

Using the same format used with the catechists, a presentation is made to the Council on the Restored Order. The same concerns are again raised by the Council

regarding Confirmation and maturity. There is concern also about the present and future involvement of young people in the life of the Church that leads to an extended discussion on the subject of the vitality of youth ministry in the parish.

The Council seems to understand the reason for the Restored Order but some question the need for change. A couple members of Council question whether Confirmation has a different meaning in the Church today. Others feel that it has different meanings depending on when it is celebrated.

After these sessions, the Council endorses the Restored Order. It encourages the Staff to provide sufficient information by way of the parish bulletin and education programs for the parishioners regarding the Restored Order. The Council also suggests further development of youth ministry in the parish.

## **2. Parish Formation**

### **a. Study Group**

In the summer of 2000, a study group is formed consisting of members of the Staff, catechists and interested adults. The purpose of this group is to study the Sacraments of Initiation with emphasis on Confirmation in preparation for the Restored Order. This study group, consisting of thirty-five members, meets on four evenings. Below is an outline of each session.

## Session One

- I. Introductions are made with individuals providing information about themselves and involvement in the parish.
- II. After a presentation on the Restored Order, groups are formed to discuss any questions or concerns they may wish to voice. These questions and concerns are placed on poster board and posted in the room to make certain that they are addressed over the four-week period. Participants are encouraged to add questions and concerns to the listed ones as they are raised during the sessions.
- III. Each participant completes a questionnaire regarding his or her history of Christian Initiation. Each person is asked to reflect on which of the sacraments is most remembered. After sharing in large groups, reports are presented to the whole group.
- IV. A more complete presentation on the proposed Restored Order of celebrating Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist is given using the following outline:
  - A. A brief presentation on Initiation Theology.
  - B. An overview of the practice of celebrating Confirmation in the Church today.
  - C. Differences regarding when Confirmation is celebrated in the Diocese of Cleveland and throughout the United States.

- D. A Rationale for “Confirmation with First Eucharist” is distributed and discussed.<sup>3</sup>
- V. This session closes with the opportunity for questions to be addressed.

### Session Two

The focus of this session is the history of the Sacraments of Initiation with special emphasis on Confirmation.

- I. Rev. Michael Woost, Assistant professor of Liturgical and Sacramental Theology from St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School of Theology gives a presentation on the sequence and historical development of the Initiation Rites with emphasis on the Sacrament of Confirmation. In response to the presentation, small group discussion focuses on the following questions:
  - A. What is your first reaction to the presentation?
  - B. How does this presentation affect the way formation is done for the sacraments in our parish?
  - C. What are the implications the Restored Order presents for parish life?
- II. Feedback is given from the individual groups followed by a period of questions and answers.
- III. This session concludes with materials being provided to the participants on faith development and meeting the needs of young people in the parish. This

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix A, 121-22.

material is from the publication on youth ministry written by a committee of the United States Conference of Bishops.<sup>4</sup>

### Session Three

This session looks at processes of faith formation and ways to involve young people in the life of the Church. Three presentations are given followed by time for discussion and questions:

- I. The first presentation is on different approaches to faith formation for those preparing for the sacraments.<sup>5</sup>
- II. The second presentation is on the “three paradigms of Confirmation.”<sup>6</sup>
- III. The third presentation is on the faith formation process presently in place at Holy Cross and the possible design of a process for the Restored Order.
- IV. Participants are asked to reflect on materials from the Youth Ministry Office of the Diocese of Cleveland and from the U.S. Bishops on youth ministry in preparation for the final session.

### Session Four

The focus of the fourth session is on youth ministry and the involvement of young people in the life of the Church.

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<sup>4</sup> United States Catholic Conference, *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1997), 19-44.

<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *CIC Newsletter* 1, no. 3. (Loveland, Ohio: Treehaus Communications, 1990).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Zansig, *Discovery Program: Celebrating Confirmation* (Winona, MN: St. Mary's Press, 1991).

- I. Using the outline obtained from *Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry* from the United States Catholic Conference, participants discuss the present reality of youth ministry and possible vision of what could take place to enhance the ministry in the parish.<sup>7</sup> This is followed by reports and a brainstorming session as to how to involve young adults more fully into the life of the Church.
- II. A discussion is held regarding concerns over implementing the Restored Order. The following are questions and concerns that are elicited from the participants:
  - A. There is still concern over “losing” young people from the Church if Confirmation is celebrated at First Eucharist.
  - B. The question of understanding the meaning of the sacraments when celebrated at an early age.
  - C. It is felt that a Bishop should preside at Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist as well as at Confirmation for older candidates.
  - D. Some feel that there should be two ages for Confirmation and allow families to choose the age based on their understanding of the sacraments.
  - E. Some feel that since we are attempting to retrieve our tradition the Sacraments of Initiation should be celebrated at Baptism.
  - F. Concern over different parishes following different sequences leads to the suggestion that the Bishop determine one sequence for the entire diocese.
- III. The entire group discusses ways to further educate the parish on the Restored Order before implementation. The following are the suggestions made:

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<sup>7</sup> United States Catholic Conference, *Renewing the Vision*, 19-44.

- A. Have an adult education program on the sacraments stressing the Sacraments of Initiation.
  - B. Provide a program on the spirituality of children.
  - C. Publish a series of bulletin announcements regarding the Restored Order.
  - D. Invite Fr. Woost to do a presentation on the history of the Sacraments of Initiation.
  - E. Continue to develop a youth ministry program for the parish.
- IV. To conclude this process a handout entitled “Frequently Asked Questions about Confirmation and First Eucharist” is distributed and discussed.<sup>8</sup> This handout will also be used with parents and other groups regarding the Restored Order.
- V. This session ended with inviting the participants to continue being involved in the implementation of the Restored Order and the development of programs for all age groups in the parish.

#### **b. Adult Education Program**

An adult education series is held for the parish centering on the spirituality of children and the Restored Order. This series consists of three separate programs:

- I. A five-week course on the sacraments is offered to interested catechists and adult members of the parish. Special emphasis is placed on the Sacraments of Initiation.
- II. An evening program is offered on the spirituality of children. This presentation is offered to parents of pre-school and school age children.

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<sup>8</sup> Appendix A, 123-24.

III. A presentation on the History of Confirmation by Fr. Michael Woost is given.

This presentation is open to all members of the parish.

**c. Bulletin Announcements**

A series of announcements regarding the implementation of the Restored Order are published in the weekly bulletin. These articles reflect information shared with catechists and members of the council that explains the rationale for the implementing the Restored Order.<sup>9</sup>

**d. Presentation to parish entities**

A presentation is developed and presented to various groups in the parish regarding the Restored Order. This presentation includes the rationale for the Restored Order with emphasis on the history of the Initiation Sacraments, what implementation means to the parish and the challenge it presents regarding the involvement of young people in the life of the Church.

Even after all the formation of the parish takes place, parishioners again voice the concerns regarding Confirmation. There is the concern of whether children are fully prepared for all these sacraments at one time and the concern about their future involvement in Church life.

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix A, 125-29.



### **B. *Children of Light***

The formation program for children preparing for the sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist is entitled *Children of Light*. In addition to candidates preparing for Confirmation and First Eucharist, older siblings who are also preparing for Confirmation are invited to be part of this process with the intent that they are confirmed at the same times as the younger candidates.

This process is family-centered, meaning that the entire nuclear and extended family of the candidate is involved in the process. The process is also parish-based, meaning that while the catechesis takes place in the parish grade school and PSR program the actual process of formation for the candidates takes place outside the classroom environment in parish sessions.

The process begins with an introductory meeting for parents explaining the Restored Order process and the *Children of Light* program. During this meeting, the same information provided catechists and council members is given to the parents affording them the opportunity to have their questions answered.

Below is an outline of the *Children of Light* process:

#### **1. Family Interview**

The *Children of Light* process begins with a family interview during which the process is explained.<sup>10</sup> To indicate that the family has an important part in this formation process a “covenant” is signed indicating that all are willing to participate in this process.

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<sup>10</sup> Appendix B, 130.

During the interview the concept of a “scrapbook” is introduced. Each candidate, with the assistance of family members, creates a scrapbook that is used throughout the formation process. This book is to be a record of formation activities and a book of memory for the candidate and family of the year that finalizes one’s initiation into the Church. Materials are provided to the family to begin creating the scrapbook.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, a family picture is taken. This picture is displayed with those of other families of candidates in the gathering space in the church to encourage parishioners to support them in this process through their prayers.

## 2. Rite of Enrollment

At the weekend Liturgies before the first family session, the candidates for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are presented to the parish community. At each Liturgy, they are prayed for and blessed as they begin the year of formation. While the enrollment rite formalizes the beginning of the process of formation of candidates and families, it also provides the community the opportunity to offer their prayerful support.

## 3. Family Sessions

Immediate families and extended families, including godparents,, are invited to be part of each session. Each of the family sessions uses Scripture that is shared and reflected upon. A symbol and a ritual are also used in each session that supports the focus of the session that ends with a prayer service.

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix B, 131-44.

### First Session

The first session is entitled “Becoming Disciples/Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus.” The symbols used in this session are “hands, feet and hearts.” The concept of service is introduced and families are asked to reflect on the meaning of service and the ways they can be of service to the Church and the community. Each family is asked to participate in some type of service activity and to enter their reflections on their service activities in their scrapbook.<sup>12</sup>

### Second Session

The theme of the second session is “Remembering Who We Are and Whose We Are.” This session provides candidates and families time to reflect on the meaning of Baptism. In this session, godparents or other adults share the meaning of faith with those present. The symbol for this session is “water” emphasizing Baptism.<sup>13</sup>

### Third Session

This session is entitled “We Are a Community of the Spirit” and the sponsors for the candidates are especially invited. The focus of this session is the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Sacrament of Confirmation that is the completion of Baptism. This sacrament celebrates the Spirit in the lives of believers. The primary symbols used in the rite of Confirmation are employed in this session: oil and the laying on of hands.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Appendix B, 145-50.

<sup>13</sup> Appendix B, 151-54.

<sup>14</sup> Appendix B, 155-58.

#### Fourth Session

The theme of this final family session is “Memories and Traditions.”

Grandparents are especially invited, and through the vehicle of stories and the sharing of memories, activities center on the connection between the sharing of a meal and the life of the community. The Eucharist, the sacred meal at which the “Bread of Life” is shared, is the way the Church community remembers and shares in the very life of Christ. This session concludes with a ritual that uses primary symbols of the Eucharist as the focal points for reflection. After the ritual, the families share homemade bread and juice.<sup>15</sup>

#### 4. Sacrament of Reconciliation

Before the season of Lent, a Communal Reconciliation Service is held for all candidates and their families in the formation process for Confirmation and First Eucharist. It is important that family members, especially parents, participate in this service because of the unique role they have in the faith life of their children.

#### 5. Family Retreat Day

Candidates participate in a retreat day as final preparation for the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Candidates bring their completed scrapbooks and share with one another what they did throughout this time of preparation. Using various activities such as stories, baking bread and making banners candidates reflect on the symbols of the Sacraments of Initiation. Each candidate takes bread home to share with the family

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix B, 159-61.

symbolic of the Eucharistic bread shared that allows a believer, fully initiated, to be bread for the world.<sup>16</sup>

## 6. Celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist

The celebration of Confirmation and First Eucharist takes place during the Easter season at the Sunday Liturgies on a designated weekend. The candidates are seated with their families throughout the Liturgy. The rites are celebrated with full solemnity as these candidates complete their initiation at the Table of the Lord.

The decision to celebrate Confirmation and Eucharist at the Sunday Liturgy is based on the same reason that parents are encouraged to have their children baptized at the Sunday Eucharist. The community gathers at the Liturgy and welcomes those being initiated into the community that is represented by those present. These are actions of the Church and not private rites and are celebrated at the time when the community assembles.

## 7. Addendum

Besides the Rite of Enrollment, the parishioners of the parish are invited on another occasion to show their support for candidates preparing for initiation into the Church. The parish has a Lenten activity entitled “Our Hearts Are in Your Hands” which provides all with opportunity of praying for those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation. People are asked to take a “heart” with a name on it and remember the person throughout Lent. They are encouraged to write a letter of support for the candidate that is

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<sup>16</sup> Appendix B, 162-66.

sent to the parish and given to the person. This activity emphasizes the union of the candidates with others in the parish during the time of formation.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology and Research Design**

The purpose of this study is to explore whether or not the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation provides a new understanding that Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are initiation rites concluding with the reception of Eucharist. This study also explores the question of whether the Restored Order re-establishes the belief that the Sacrament of Confirmation is a rite of initiation and not a rite of maturity. The following research questions are proposed:

1. Does the Restored Order teach that the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist are rites of initiation of the Catholic Church?
2. Does the Restored Order teach that the Sacrament of Confirmation is not about maturity but about initiation?
3. Has the Sacrament of Confirmation lost its significance because of the multiple meanings attributed to it?
4. Will the celebration of the proper sequence of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist give impetus for Catholics to complete initiation into the Catholic Church?

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of research are used to evaluate the projected outcome of this project that the Restored Order provides a different understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This chapter provides an overview of the methods employed in this research.

### Focus Groups and Interviews

The qualitative methods for collecting data regarding the implementation of the Restored Order are *focus groups* and *interviews*. Both of these qualitative methods provide different venues for individuals and groups to provide insights into the Restored Order process.

The *interview* method is used with catechists, staff members from Holy Cross parish and personnel from other parishes in the “pilot” study to gauge insights and experiences about the Restored Order. The questions used in the *interview* process are the following:

1. How was the Restored Order introduced to the parish?
2. What process was used to prepare the parish for the Restored Order?
3. Was there agreement among the staff regarding implementation? If there is not, how are the concerns addressed?
4. What are the positive experiences you have regarding the Restored Order?
5. What are the challenges the Restored Order presents the parish?
6. There appears to be two theologies regarding Confirmation. How is this addressed in the parish?
7. How do you perceive the reaction of the parish to implementing the Restored Order?
8. What is your experience with Bishops presiding at Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist?
9. What suggestion would you make regarding the Restored Order?



The interviews are taped and transcribed. They are examined for common insights that these individuals have regarding the process of implementing the Restored Order.

There are three different *focus groups* formed to discuss the Restored Order. These *focus groups* are different from *interviews* conducted in that there are a number of participants who can more freely carry on a discussion based on the insights of one another. Each of these groups is different as to their interaction with the implementation of the Restored Order.

The first *focus group* consists of the personnel of the *Office of Catechetical Services* of the Diocese of Cleveland. This group of individuals oversees the pilot study regarding the Restored Order and it is their responsibility to make recommendations to the Bishop about diocesan policies concerning the faith formation of candidates for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. This group met for about two hours around the following questions:

- What are the positive experiences you have been told by parish personnel regarding the Restored Order?
- What are the challenges the Restored Order presents the Diocese and your office, in particular?
- Is the Restored Order perceived as just another option regarding the celebration of the time of Confirmation?
- What is the role of the Bishop regarding the Restored Order?
- There appear to be two theologies regarding Confirmation. Could you comment?

- Parishes involved in the pilot study raise the concern that not all the Bishops are “on the same page” regarding the meaning of Confirmation and the Restored Order. Has your office addressed this concern?
- Are other parishes interested in implementing the Restored Order?
- What are your concerns regarding the Restored Order?

The second *focus group* consists of catechists and staff members of other parishes in the pilot study. Using questions similar to the ones used in the *interview* process, this group reflected on each other’s experiences regarding the Restored Order and its implementation in their particular parishes. Four parishes participate in this group. The following are questions used in the discussion:

- How did your parish implement the Restored Order?
- What is the general reaction to the Restored Order among parishioners?
- What are the positive and negative reactions to the Restored Order in your parish?
- Is there a different perception of Confirmation due to the change of sequence?
- What are your recommendations regarding the Restored Order?
- What are your concerns?

The third *focus group* consists of parents and other parishioners involved in the preliminary process for the Restored Order and/or in the *Children of Light* formation process for candidates preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist. This group consists totally of parishioners from Holy Cross parish randomly chosen and invited to participate in the *focus group*. The following are the four questions to stimulate discussion:

- What does the word “Confirmation” mean to you?

- When we talk of the Sacraments of Initiation, what does that convey to you?
- What is your experience regarding the Restored Order? Does it change your mind about the meaning of Confirmation?
- We stress that Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist are initiation rites of the Church. How does this affect your understanding of these sacraments?

The participants are also asked to voice concerns or question they may have regarding the Restored Order. This allows participants the opportunity of sharing their thoughts, feelings and concerns that may not have already been vocalized. These *focus groups* are taped and transcribed to gather insights that they provide about the Restored Order. These groups provide insights that a survey or an *interview* cannot, in that people listen to the insights of others' experiences, which may help stimulate insights that would not otherwise be shared.

### **Survey**

A survey is developed to be used as both a quantitative and qualitative method of analysis about the Restored Order. This survey attempts to determine any paradigm shift that may take place regarding the Sacraments of Initiation after participating in the *Children of Light*. This instrument addresses the research questions stated in this study.

This survey is designed with the assistance of the parish DRE to explore the perceptions one has regarding the Sacraments of Initiation before and after participation in the *Children of Light* process. The survey consists of both nominal and ordinal quantitative closed-ended and structured questions, as well as qualitative open-ended questions allowing respondents to share insights that the closed-ended questions do not

provide. The survey incorporates a pre-coded format for all nominal and ordinal closed-ended questions. All qualitative data is compiled to create a text utilizing the grounded theory of interpretive analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The survey is divided into four parts:

- The first section of the survey consists of 21 statements asking the individual to best describe his/her understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist before participating in the *Children of Light* process. This section also includes four open-ended questions that allow the participant to provide further insights as to his/her understanding of these sacraments.
- The second section consists of 15 statements asking the participant to describe his/ her understanding of these sacraments after participating in the *Children of Light* process. This section also includes three open-ended questions that further elicit insights regarding this process.
- The third section of the survey consists of four open-ended questions regarding the implementation of the Restored Order. This section allows the participant to voice concerns or questions that the Restored Order may present.
- The fourth section centers on the demography of those completing the survey. Besides questions about gender and age, this section has questions that center on the faith formation of the respondent, the age of

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix C provides the survey and the responses given.

Confirmation of the respondent and the religious formation process in which the respondent's child (ren) participates.

### **Data Collection**

125 surveys are mailed to parishioners who participated in the *Children of Light* process. The participants are asked to complete the survey and return it by February 8, 2005. 89 of the 125 surveys are completed, for a return rate of 71%. The quantitative data is collected from the response items of the survey and the qualitative data from the open-ended questions are collected and transcribed.

The sessions that involve either *interviews* or *focus groups* are recorded and later transcribed. These sessions, like the open-ended questions on the survey, are evaluated for common insights regarding the Restored Order.

### **Statistical Procedure**

Using Microsoft Excel the data from the survey is transferred into separate files within the database for questions 1-21 of section one and 1-15 of section two. The qualitative data for questions 7, 15, 21, 22, and 23 in section one and questions 4 and 14, in section two and questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 in section three are entered into the spreadsheet program using brief sentences and responses. The demographic information is also entered into this database.

The *interview* sessions and the *focus groups* are recorded into the Microsoft Excel program. Like the open-ended questions from the survey, material from these sessions is

entered using brief sentences and words that indicate like insights and comments on the Restored Order.

The information from the qualitative methods and quantitative methods of analysis is studied and an analysis is performed to see whether the goals of the project have been achieved. The responses and insights are classified in order that they can be used to evaluate the project and offer insights into pastoral considerations regarding the Restored Order.

## Chapter 4 Analysis and Summary of Project

### Demographics

This section looks at the demographics of those who completed the survey. The respondents are grouped by gender with 59 females and 30 males. Demographic material, comparing female/male responses, is compiled into the following categories: age (table one), age when baptized/entered the Church (table two), age when confirmed (table three), the place of religious formation of adults (table four), the place of religious formation of children (table five), and the number of respondents' children confirmed at the time of First Eucharist and the number confirmed after First Eucharist (table six). These demographics provide insights on those who completed the survey.

The age group participating in either the survey or *focus group* mainly falls in the range of 31-45 (70%). This reflects the ages of the parents of children in the *Children of Light* process.

**Table 1**  
**Age of Respondents**

	Female	Male
<b>18-30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>31-45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>46-59</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>60 +</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Table two reflects the age at which the respondents were baptized. Most were baptized as babies (97%). Only three respondents were baptized as teenagers or adults.

This demographic indicates the strong presence of adults that have been Catholics since infancy.

**Table 2**  
**Age of Baptism**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Baby</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Child</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Teen</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Adult</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>

The age when the respondents received the Sacrament of Confirmation is important in that it provides insights as to how Confirmation may be understood by the respondents. The majority of respondents were confirmed as adolescents at the ages of 13-14 (55%). This information is found in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Age of Confirmation for Respondents**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Birth-8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>10-12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>13-14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>16-18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>+18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>



The fourth table indicates where the respondents received religious formation. The majority indicated their faith formation took place in a Catholic grade school (71%). A number indicate that they continued their faith formation in a Catholic high school and/or college (38%). A number indicate that they received faith formation in PSR programs (26%). It is important to note that a number (31%) indicate that formation took place in the home. A number of respondents state that faith formation was received in places other than a religion class, school or home. These respondents indicate that these other places were parish programs, sacramental preparation programs and Bible study groups.

**Table 4**  
**Faith Formation of Respondents**

	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Catholic Grade Grade School</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Catholic High School/ College</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>PSR</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Home</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>

The fifth table indicates where the children of the respondents receive religious formation. Again, it is important to note that 45% indicate this formation takes place not just in a structured environment like a school or parish program but in the home. This

demographic also seems to indicate that most respondents (94%) are products of a Catholic School system.

**Table 5**  
**Faith Formation of Children of Respondents**

<b>Catholic Grade School/ High School</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>PSR</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Parish Sacramental Programs</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Parish Youth Ministry</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Generations of Faith</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Home</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>7</b>

The sixth table indicates when the children of the respondents were confirmed before or after First Eucharist. When children are confirmed in different sequences there may be a different understanding as to the meaning of the sacrament.

**Table 6**  
**The Time when Confirmation is Celebrated**

<b>At First Eucharist</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>After First Eucharist</b>	<b>52</b>

### **Descriptive Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

As explained in Chapter Three, different methods are used to evaluate this project. These methods evaluate not only the *Children of Light* process but also the process used to prepare Holy Cross Parish for the Restored Order. Staffs of other parishes in the study and of the Office of Catechetical Services provide information as to the implementation of the Restored Order in other parishes.

Quantitative data is compiled from questions in section one (1-21) and section two (1-15) of the survey. The responses to the questions are found in Appendix C of this study.

Qualitative data is also compiled from the narratives of the *focus groups* and the *interviews* held with catechists, participants in the *Children of Light* process, staffs of other parishes and the Office of Catechetical Services. In examining the answers, common responses are gleaned that provide attitudes about the Restored Order that may be different than the quantitative data or may support the data

The analysis of the data is done in three sections. First, the process used to prepare parishes for the implementation of the Restored Order is discussed. Second, the process of *Children of Light* is evaluated. Third, the formation and liturgical celebration of Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist is discussed.

### **Preparation for the Restored Order**

The material in this section is compiled from *focus groups* and *interviews*. Information is also gleaned from statements from the survey distributed to parents of those confirmed at First Eucharist.

The staffs from five of the ten parishes in this pilot study formed a *focus group* that discussed the Restored Order process. This group shared their insights into the preparation done to prepare each parish for the Restored Order.

The length of a preparation process averaged out about a year for each parish. One parish actually used two years to prepare for the implementation. The first year was used for the formation of the staff regarding the Restored Order and the second year was spent forming the parish. All the staffs believe that an educational process used to prepare the parish is essential for any implementation of the Restored Order. There is no identical process used by all the parishes surveyed.

All of the parishes indicate that the first step in implementing the Restored Order begins with staff formation. If the staff does not have a common understanding and vision regarding the Restored Order, parishioners will not accept it. One parish shared the story that a staff member reluctantly “went along” with the decision but continued to raise concerns in staff meetings and shared objections to the Restored Order with parishioners that led to division in the parish. Overall, staffs believe that there is unanimity regarding the Restored Order even though there are concerns over how the change would be accepted by parishioners.

After staff formation, each parish creates a process of preparation for the parish. One concern is that the Diocese did not have a structured process that could be used in parishes. While the Office for Catechetical Services provides input and suggestions, there is no existing unified process. Four of the five parishes used materials from

Canada<sup>1</sup> as a resource to develop a program of education. The Canadian document provides material that is beneficial to the staff in developing a process.

All five used similar venues to educate parishioners: bulletin announcements, parish newsletters, consultation with parish pastoral councils, and family meetings with parents that would be part of the process. Some parishes (three) met with different parish groups to educate as many as possible, even if they may not be directly involved in the process.

Four of the five parishes used *focus groups* to discuss the Restored Order with catechists, teachers, and parishioners. The purpose of these groups was to explain the Restored Order and to hear concerns that people had in order to develop a process that would be beneficial to the parish. The fifth parish had the same goal in mind but expanded the purpose of the group to focus on the needs of young people of the parish.

Using the homily time at Liturgy proved very useful for three of the parishes. The reason for this decision centers on the belief that this may be the only time when a large number of parishioners may hear about the Restored Order. Two parishes chose not to use this venue.

Adult educational programs centering on the Sacraments were instituted in two parishes. Staffs believed that the Restored Order implementation provided an opportunity to educate parishioners on the meaning of the sacraments in the life of the Church. These programs are also used to educate catechists and teachers about the Restored Order.

Each of the parishes believe that the formation process used was thorough. All agreed that many still have questions regarding the Restored Order after the year of

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, "*Re-visioning Confirmation*".

preparation. There will always be a need, according to these staffs, to educate people about the Restored Order. This is most important because the Diocese does not have one set sequence for the Initiation Sacraments and people registering in different parishes will be confused about the various sequences used in parishes. Below, Table 7 indicates what methods each of the five staff used to prepare their parishes for the Restored Order.

**Table 7**  
**Methodology used for formation of parish**

<b>Parish</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>Staff Formation</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b><i>Focus Groups</i></b>	X	X	X		X <sup>2</sup>
<b>Consultation with Pastoral Council</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Bulletin Announcements/ Newsletter</b>	X	X	X	X	X
<b>Meeting with parish groups</b>	X		X		X
<b>Homilies</b>		X	X	X	
<b>Educational Programs</b>			X		X
<b>Meeting with catechists</b>	X	X	X		X
<b>Parent Meetings</b>	X	X	X	X	X

It is important that all catechists and staff members use the same “language” when speaking about the sacraments. People will become more accustomed to the Restored

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<sup>2</sup> Besides the Restored Order, this *focus group* discussed issues regarding the involvement of young people in the parish.

Order when they understand that it is about Initiation, and Eucharist is the final sacrament in the process and not Confirmation.

Overall, the staffs of the five parishes believe that good methods of preparation were used in their respective parishes. Two believed that a longer period may have been beneficial because of the criticisms that were voiced about the change in sequence and moving Confirmation to an earlier age. Others believe that there “would never be enough time” for some to understand the reasoning for the Restored Order.

One staff person stated that the preparation process was rushed and feels that more time is needed to address concerns and question. This person also feels that rushing the process may indicate that the staff is not interested in the feelings of the parishioners. This may not be true but it may be the impression given to those confused with implementation. Staffs, in general, believe good preparation took place before the Restored Order implementation.

The staff of the Office of Catechetical Services indicates that information they received from parishes in the study regarding the preparation process used proved to be more than adequate. The calls received in the office about the Restored Order provided the opportunity to explain the process and to support the parishes implementing the Restored Order. One member of the OCS stated that one person felt relieved after talking with her indicating that the caller now realized it was not “just another program the pastor wanted to initiate.”

The staff of the OCS also believes that continued formation of catechists, staffs and parishioners regarding the Restored Order is essential in the parishes that adopt this process. This formation of parish is not to be a “one time” process. The Restored Order

is to be seen as the proper sequence for the sacraments and this sequence is to be taught and explained to participants and parishioners.

### ***Children of Light Process***

A survey was sent to families that participated in the *Children of Light* in Holy Cross parish during the last three years. Most of those asked to complete the survey are still parishioners but some had moved to other parishes in the Diocese of Cleveland and to other dioceses in the United States. One hundred and twenty-five surveys were mailed with eighty-nine being completed and returned.

The survey consisted of quantitative questions regarding beliefs, opinions and attitudes about Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as rites of initiation. There are two sections about the beliefs of the respondents regarding these sacraments before and after participating in the *Children of Light* process. Respondents were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their answers. The figures below provide the means of the responses given to the statements used in this analysis.

### **Section One of the Survey**

This section focuses on the attitudes and beliefs of the respondents regarding the Sacraments of Initiation before participating in the *Children of Light* process. The respondents could answer the questions using a scale of one to five (1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree). Each person can also choose not to respond to the question citing that for the person it is not applicable (6=NA).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix C, 168-75.



Certain questions in this section center on the basic beliefs one has regarding the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist. While the answers given provide insights into the beliefs of the respondents or at least what they recall from their formation, many of these questions do not center on the research questions of this project.

This project focuses on whether there is a new understanding of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist as initiation rites when celebrated in proper sequence. I intend to focus on those questions that specifically deal with initiation. I also discuss those questions that impact the understanding of Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation instead of maturity.

Baptism seems to be understood as a Sacrament of Initiation by a majority of respondents before participating in the *Children of Light* process. Statements #6 and #7 focus on the belief that Baptism is about initiation.<sup>4</sup> Figure One plots the responses to these statements giving the mean response of all respondents.

A majority of the respondents (68%) strongly believe that at Baptism “the community celebrates the first step in receiving a new member.” This statement also indicates that Baptism is an action of the community. A majority (58%) strongly believe that in the sacrament of Baptism “a person receives one sacrament of three that initiates him/ her into the Church.” It seems that people do not have a difficult time believing that Baptism is an initiation rite in that it is the first sacrament celebrated in the life of the Christian.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix C, 168.

Figure One

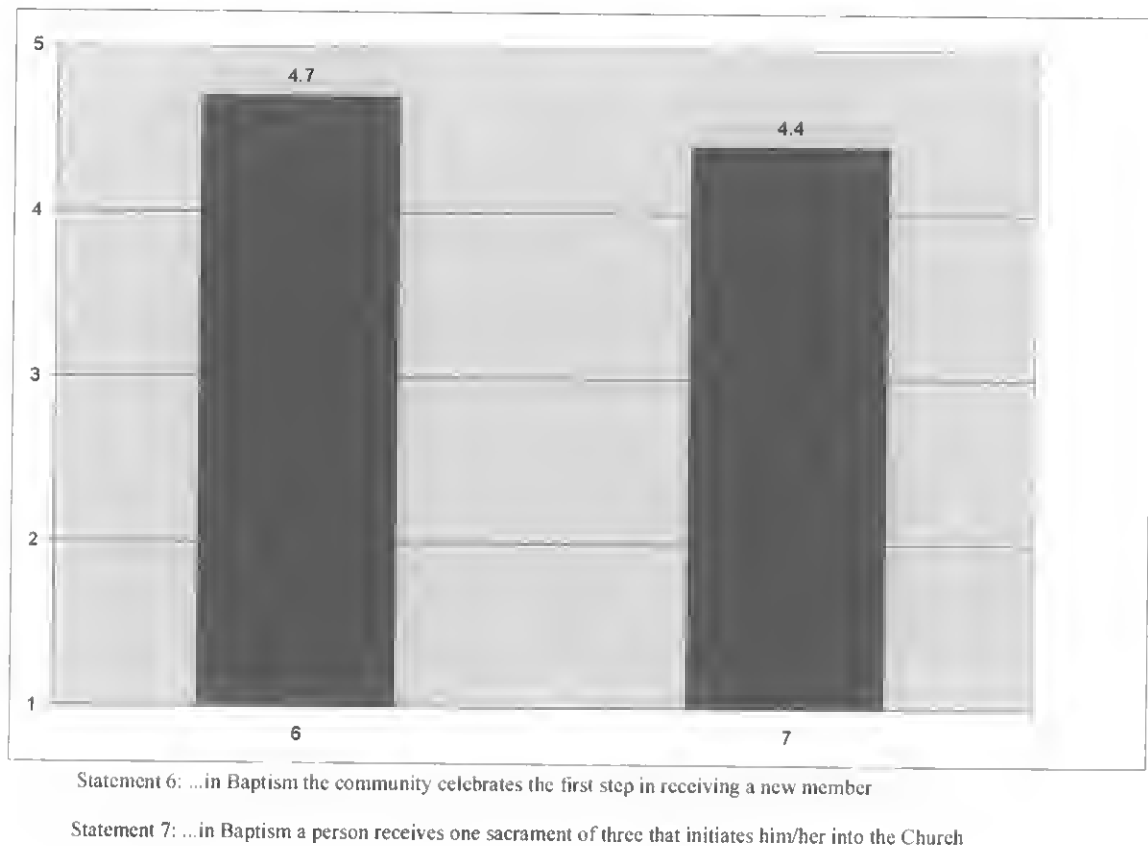
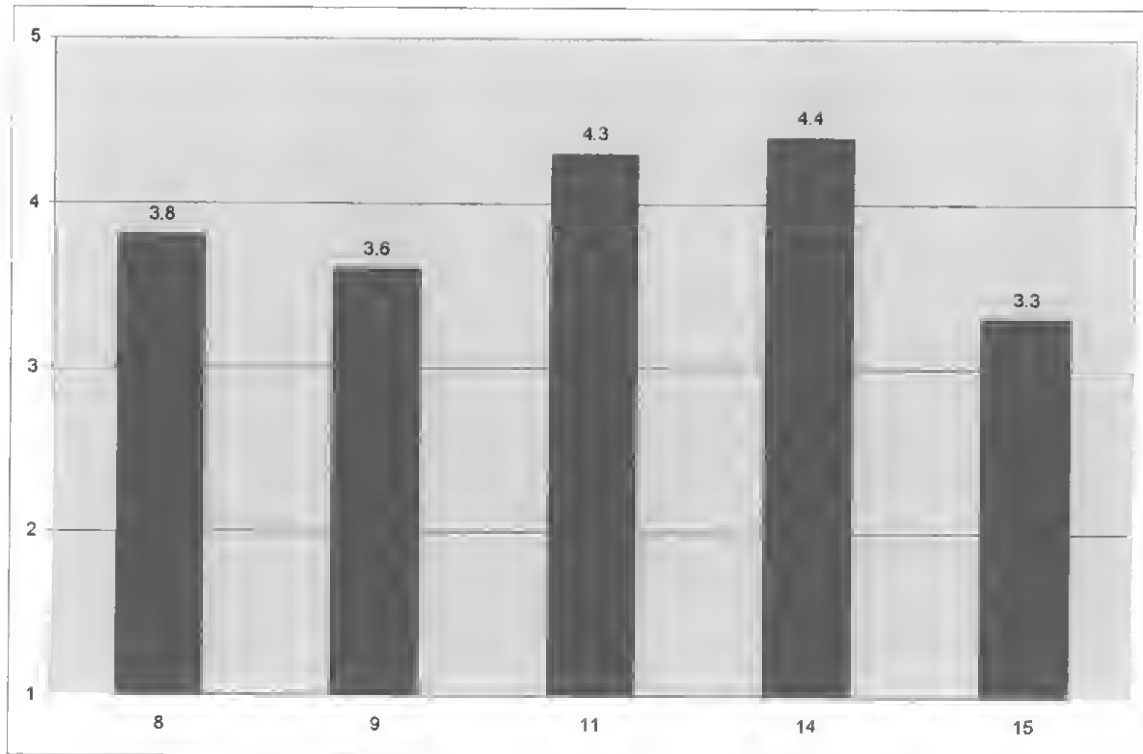


Figure Two reflects the responses given on statements about the Sacrament of Confirmation. When answering statements that reflect Confirmation as a sacrament of maturity, 55% strongly believe that one is now a full member of the Church (statement #11) and 58% strongly believe that a person is fully initiated into the Church (statement #14).

Interestingly, some responses are not what I expected. I presumed that concepts such as being an “adult” in the Church or being a “soldier of Christ” would resonate strongly with those surveyed. In fact only 31% strongly believe that one becomes an “adult” in the Church at Confirmation (statement #8) and only 34% strongly believe that Confirmation makes one a “soldier of Christ” (statement #9).

What is not surprising is the response to the statement that at Confirmation “one receives the second Sacrament of Initiation” (statement #15). Only 22% of the respondents strongly agree with that statement.

**Figure 2**



Statement 8: ...in the Sacrament of Confirmation one is an “adult” in the Catholic Church

Statement 9: ...in the Sacrament of Confirmation one is a “soldier of Christ.”

Statement 11: ...in the Sacrament of Confirmation one is now a full member of the Catholic Church

Statement 14: ...in the Sacrament of Confirmation one is fully initiated into the Catholic Church

Statement 15: ...in the Sacrament of Confirmation one receives the second Sacrament of Initiation

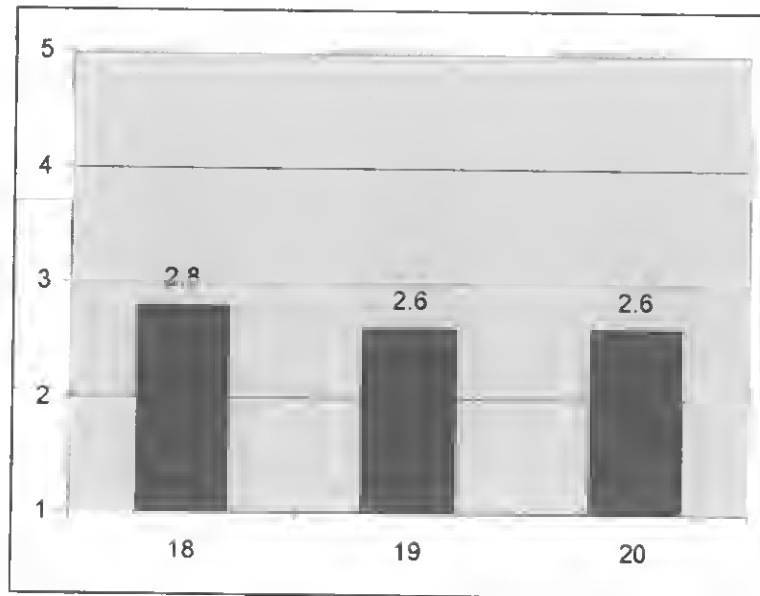
The open-ended statement regarding the strongest memory people have regarding Confirmation elicits interesting responses. A number (six)<sup>5</sup> of people stated that

<sup>5</sup> The number in parentheses indicates how often this response is given to the open-ended statements.

choosing their sponsor is strong in their memory while others (eight) feel that it was the fact that they were making a decision to be Catholic was most important to them. The fact that the Bishop was present for the Confirmation celebration was important to many (thirteen).

Surprisingly only a few respondents mentioned receiving the Holy Spirit (three) or receiving the gifts of the Spirit (two) as being important to them. A number focused on making a decision and choosing a sponsor. One person mentioned that the reception after the Liturgy was important while another remembers the “slap” by the Bishop that indicated one was called to be a “soldier of Christ.” Another person spoke of feeling important because Confirmation makes one a full member of a “large family.” One person recounted the incident that a person fainted in front of him and needed to be taken out of the Church. Doing “service” hours seemed to have had an impact on one person who stated that all the preparation consisted of was “counting hours of service” and “memorizing prayers.”

When reflecting on First Eucharist, few understand it as a Sacrament of Initiation. In responding to the statement that First Eucharist “completes initiation into the Catholic Church” (statement #18), 23% strongly agreed. Only 11% of the respondents strongly believe that at First Eucharist “one is now a full member of the Church” (statement #19) and that “one receives the final Sacrament of Initiation” (statement #20). Figure three plots the responses to these statements.

**Figure 3**

Statement 18: ...at First Communion one completes initiation into the Catholic Church.

Statement 19: ...at First Communion one is now a full member of the Catholic Church

Statement 20: ...at First Communion one receives the final Sacrament of Initiation

Memories of First Eucharist seem to center on family and preparations. There was a strong feeling that there was a great deal of preparation (eight) and that a lot more attention placed on practice (twelve) for the celebration. Two people indicated that it was most important because it was celebrated on a Sunday when the church was full of people. One person felt special in that she was now able to go with others in the family to receive communion. Many (fourteen) indicated the importance of being able to receive the body and blood of Jesus each time they went to Mass.

When asked what sacrament (Confirmation or Eucharist) is most remembered, the majority of respondents indicated they have a more affectionate memory of Eucharist. Reasons that are given center on the preparation (eight), the involvement of the family and the parties and pictures that are associated with the celebration (fifteen). Some

remember their Confirmation strongly because it had to do with making a decision regarding being a Catholic (nine).

## **Section Two of the Survey**

This section measures the beliefs of participants after completing the *Children of Light* process with the celebration of Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist. This survey measures any change in beliefs and attitude regarding Confirmation and First Eucharist being Sacraments of Initiation because of the sequence that is used. Since there is already a strong belief that Baptism is perceived as a rite of initiation, it is not part of the analysis. Responses given to the statements on Baptism only (#1, #6) are found in Appendix C.

The first part of this section examines the understanding of Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation received before First Eucharist. The role of the Bishop in the celebration of the sacrament is also examined. The second part of this section examines the understanding of First Eucharist as the sacrament that completes the initiation process into the Church. In the last part of this section, questions regarding religious formation and the celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist are discussed.

### **I. Confirmation as a Sacrament of Initiation.**

Is Confirmation a sacrament of initiation? When responding to the statement: "Confirmation is the second sacrament that is part of the initiation process...." (statement #2) the majority (67% ) state they strongly agreed or agreed, while only 15% either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement.

Respondents indicated that they have a different understanding of the meaning of Confirmation when celebrated in a different sequence. Responding to the statement: “Changing the order of celebration of Communion—Confirmation to Confirmation—Communion gives a different meaning to Confirmation” (statement #4), 55% stated they agreed or strongly agreed while 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The sequence of the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist does seem to impact the understanding that these rites are about initiation. Respondents also continue to understand Confirmation as the sacrament in which the Holy Spirit is received (statement #7).

There was not a strong feeling about the statement: “Confirmation symbolizes that one is a full member of the Church, with full understanding of her teachings” (statement #9). Only 27% agreed or strongly agreed, 37% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 28% were neutral about this statement. In section one of the survey, statement #11 indicates that Confirmation makes one a “full member of the Catholic Church,” and 73% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. It seems that there is some change in understanding the meaning of Confirmation.

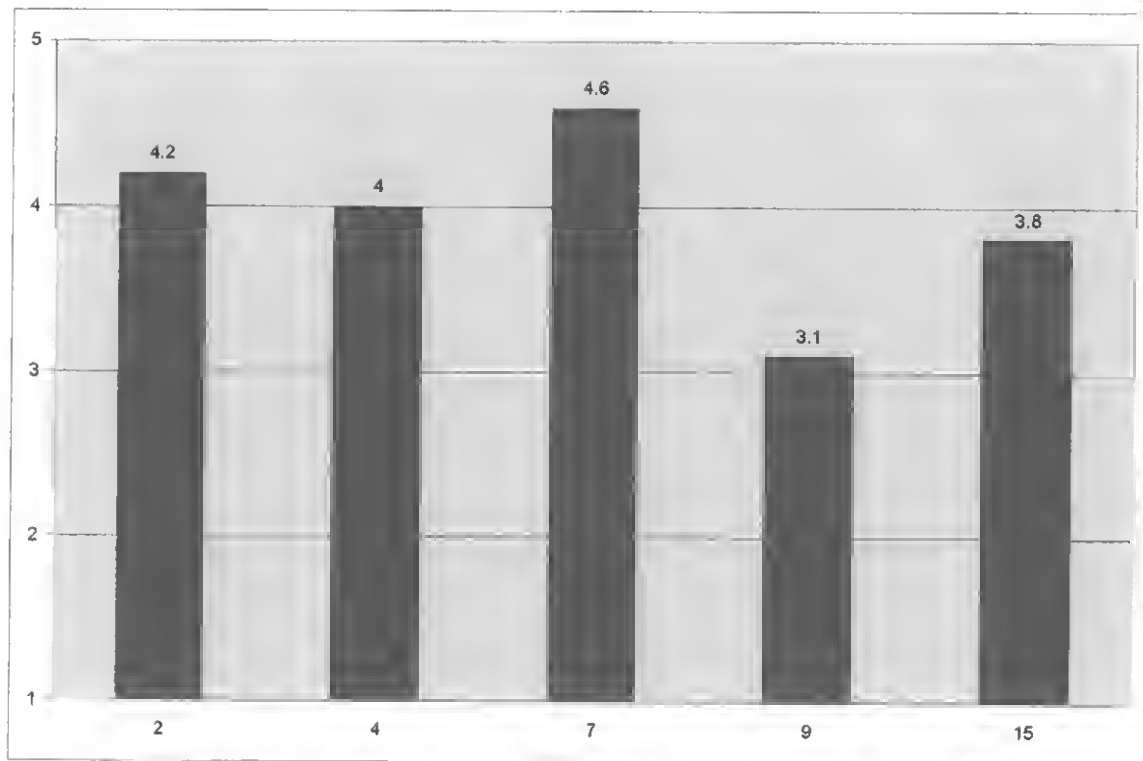
Answering the statement “Confirmation sealed my child(ren)’s Baptism so that (s)he was ready to share at the Lord’s Table,” 57% agreed or strongly agreed while only 15% strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Respondents indicated that they have a different understanding of the meaning of Confirmation when celebrated in a different sequence. Responding to the statement: “Changing the order of celebration of Communion—Confirmation to Confirmation—Communion gives a different meaning to Confirmation” (statement #4), 55% stated they agreed or strongly agreed while 16% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. The sequence of the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist does seem to impact the understanding that these rites are about initiation. Respondents also continue to understand Confirmation as the sacrament in which the Holy Spirit is received (statement #7).

There was not a strong feeling about the statement: “Confirmation symbolizes that one is a full member of the Church, with full understanding of her teachings” (statement #9). Only 27% agreed or strongly agreed, 37% strongly disagreed or disagreed, and 28% were neutral about this statement. In section one of the survey, statement #11 indicates that Confirmation makes one a “full member of the Catholic Church,” and 73% strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. It seems that there is some change in understanding the meaning of Confirmation.

Answering the statement “Confirmation sealed my child(ren)’s Baptism so that (s)he was ready to share at the Lord’s Table,” 57% agreed or strongly agreed while only 15% strongly disagreed or disagreed.



**Figure 4**

Statement 2: Confirmation is the second sacrament that is part of the initiation process when the bishop anoints the candidate with Holy Chrism.

Statement 4: Changing the order of celebration of Communion—Confirmation to Confirmation—Communion gives a different meaning to Confirmation.

Statement 7: At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the candidate and the person is anointed with Holy Chrism.

Statement 9: Confirmation symbolizes that one is a full member of the Church, with full understanding of her teachings.

Statement 15: Confirmation sealed my child(ren)'s Baptism so that (s)he was ready to share at the Lord's Table.

There does seem to be a shift in the understanding as to the meaning of Confirmation. When responding to the quantitative statements people give, responses seem to reflect what the Restored Order says about Confirmation although many have great concerns. These concerns are evident in the responses to open-ended statements that allowed people to elaborate on their answers. These concerns are also raised in the *focus group* that parents and staff members participated in about the Restored Order.

When asked whether the Restored Order of the sacraments “make sense to you”, the overwhelming response is a definite “yes” but some have reservations. One person responded, “I believe in the restoring of the order” but questioned what age is most appropriate. This led to the person stating that there is a need for children to understand more on all levels of development, spiritual and intellectual. One person responded, “Confirmation was always looked upon as the end of the learning journey into the Catholic family.” Another person stated that it is easy to understand the theological reasons for the Restored Order but since I was confirmed after receiving Communion, “it seems strange to me.”

Many of the reservations people have about the Restored Order center on their own experience of the sacraments, when they should be received, and on the catechetical formation of the candidates for the sacraments. As a result, many feel that the focus and the importance of each sacrament are diminished. A staff member from a parish in the pilot study stated “it seems difficult, in some cases, for people to get past the way ‘they did it when I was a kid.’”

Regarding their own experience of the sequence of the sacraments, one person stated that the “Church cannot change its teaching every generation and say it is okay to believe something differently.” Several people stated that they were greatly confused by the fact that they were taught one thing and now there is a different teaching regarding Confirmation. This led to the other concern about Confirmation being celebrated at the time of First Eucharist and the need for more catechetical formation.

There is great concern over whether or not a person is ready to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation based on understanding of the sacrament. Many respondents

stated that children at the “age of discretion” do not have the knowledge to “make the decision” to be confirmed. There still remains in the minds of many that this sacrament (Confirmation) has to do with one making a decision to live life in the Catholic Church. Several people believe that a young person cannot have an understanding of the meaning of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. One person stated that the celebration of Confirmation at a later age provides the opportunity of forming young people in the teachings of the Church regarding moral issues. The fear is that many will not complete their faith formation and thus not be equipped to address issues they may face in their lives.

While many indicate concerns that candidates understand about the meaning of the sacraments, others stated that through their participation in the *Children of Light* process, while they do not totally understand the Restored Order, they are coming to understand the “why” or “purpose” of this sequence. One person stated rather insightfully “As time goes on it makes more and more sense, although change is difficult. The Spirit works through us our entire life. It’s a growth thing.” A parent stated that she had a discussion with her child about Confirmation and the Eucharist and felt that the child expressed his understanding well for his age which led her to feel more comfortable with the Restored Order knowing that her child will continue to understand more deeply as he matures in his faith.

## **II. The Role of the Bishop**

The Bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Unfortunately, a Bishop was not available to celebrate the sacrament for those receiving Confirmation at the time of First Eucharist at Holy Cross. At each celebration, the

presider stated that the Bishop was unable to be present and that the Bishop is the ordinary minister of the sacrament and it is only by exception that the priest is delegated to celebrate the sacrament. In section three of the survey, #3 states “the Bishop is the Ordinary Minister of Confirmation but was unable to be present for Confirmation at Communion at Holy Cross. Did this cause you concern? Explain.” The responses proved interesting.

Some expressed “confusion” as to the role of the Bishop in Confirmation since there was an expectation that the Bishop would be the celebrant while others stated that it made little difference. Some people feel that the Bishop made their own Confirmation very special and they would want that for their children. As one respondent stated, “I was looking forward to the Bishop celebrating Confirmation with my children and I was disappointed.” Another stated, “I was always taught the Bishop is the only one who can confirm a person. The Church should get its beliefs together and stick to them. Changing them every generation makes for very confused Catholics.” One respondent stated that he was “confused” because a Bishop came to celebrate Confirmation for older candidates but did not come for his younger child. He asked the question “What does that say about the Bishop’s understanding of the Restored Order?”

Some responses to #3 indicate that the Bishop is more ceremonial and “makes the celebration special” which may lead to a misunderstanding of the fact that he is the Ordinary minister of the sacrament. Several people stated that the presence of the Bishop “underscores the event.” One person stated that the presence of the Bishop “connects the children to the larger Church and this connection is important as children mature and move away from home and begin their own families.”

The majority of respondents did not seem concerned over the fact that the Bishop did not celebrate Confirmation for their children. Many seemed very comfortable with the parish priest conferring the sacrament since he “knows the children”, the children “feel comfortable with the priest”, and “they are less nervous.” Several people responded that there is no need for the Bishop to be present since “we do not know him.” Other stated that it would have been good to have the Bishop, but it was more important that Confirmation was celebrated at the Sunday Eucharist when the community was present.

There may be a misunderstanding of the importance of the Bishop in the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. If Bishops are not available to celebrate Confirmation at First Eucharist, the role of the Bishop will be diminished as in previous times. His role as the Ordinary minister of the sacrament may be lost and seen as unimportant.

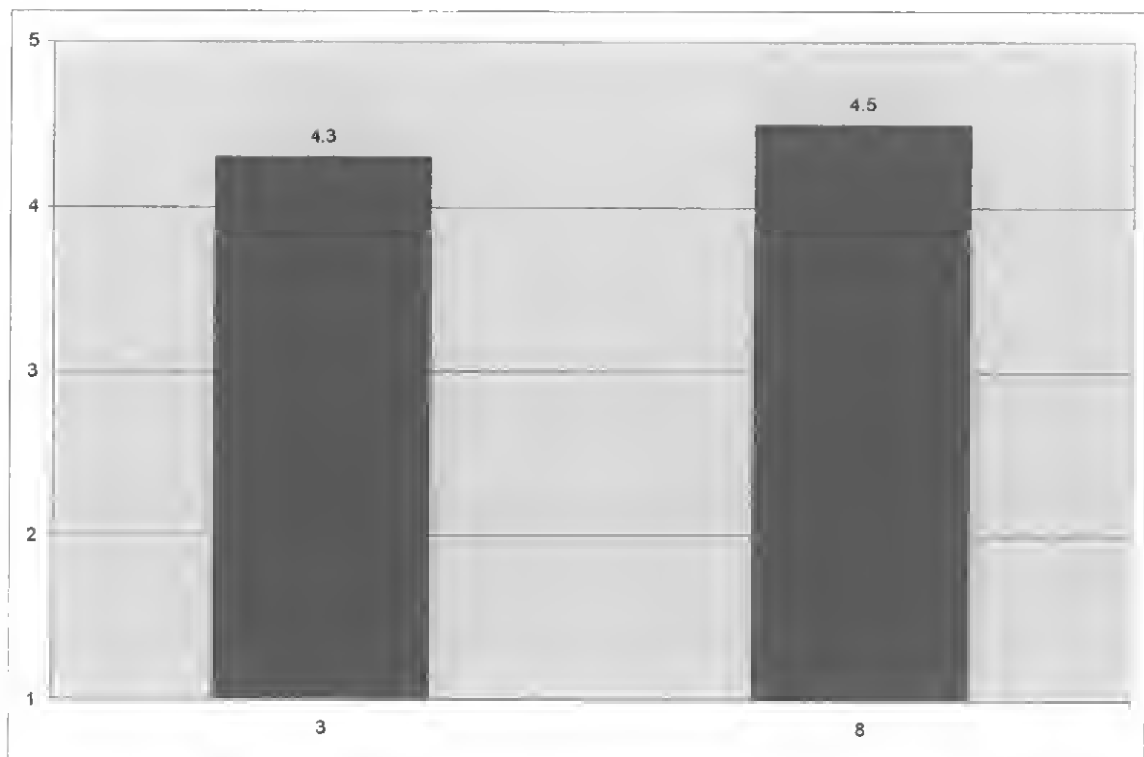
### **III. Eucharist as the Final Sacrament of Initiation**

The Restored Order emphasizes that the final sacrament that completes initiation is Eucharist. Statements #3 and #8 in section two of the survey address this understanding of the Eucharist. In responding to statement #3, 65% of the respondents agree or strongly agree that First Eucharist completes one’s initiation into the Church as a person “comes to the Table” as a full member of the community. Less than 1% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Statement #8 states that “at First Communion the candidate completes initiation as the Body and Blood of Christ are received at the ‘table of the Lord.’” In responding to this statement, 76% agreed or strongly agreed while less than 1% disagreed or strongly

disagreed. Figure 5 plots these answers to the statements regarding Eucharist and indicates the mean responses.

**Figure 5**



Statement 3: First Communion completes one's initiation into the Church as one "comes to the Table" as a full member of the community.

Statement 8: At First Communion the candidate completes initiation as the Body and Blood of Christ are received at the "table of the Lord."

When asked to comment on First Eucharist as the final sacrament of initiation, the majority of responses were very positive. While there is resistance to understanding Confirmation as an initiation rite there is little resistance regarding the understanding of Eucharist as initiatory.

One person stated: "To me First Communion is the ultimate sharing with the Church community. As the final sacrament it now means that you have gone through a

rite of passage.” Another respondent stated’ “It (the Restored Order) gives a new and clearer understanding of receiving the Body and Blood with Catholics everywhere.”

Finally, another person, reflecting on Eucharist as the final initiation sacrament, stated: “I think Communion makes more sense as a final step. It made an impression on me as a child because from then on I would receive Communion with my fellow parishioners and ‘fully’ participate at the Sunday service.”

Not all respondents were as positive in understanding that the Eucharist is the final rite of initiation. Concerns still center on the need for children to decide whether or not to be Catholic at the time of Confirmation and whether celebrating the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist at the same time was a good idea. Some objected to the change because it was not what they had experienced in their own life. Still others objected because of the need to connect catechetical formation with the reception of the sacraments.

One person objected to the sequence when she said: “...First Communion always seemed like you were just beginning your education as a Catholic and not ending it.”

Another person reflected the same concern when she said, “I am concerned my child will not receive adequate instructions through the church and school in grades 6 through 8.

As a parent, I hope my discussions are supplemented by the church and school.”

The concern over being adequately prepared for the sacraments gives the impression that these rites are received because of having certain understandings as to their meaning. This concern was reflected in the response of the person who wrote, “I am still not sure about the age we have chosen for confirmation/Communion but I better

understand that it is about family and community sharing your faith with each other. I like the support. I am not sure 8 year olds can comprehend all it encompasses.”

#### **IV. Formation and Liturgical Celebration of Confirmation at Eucharist**

Throughout the process of *Children of Light*, concern was raised as to the readiness of the candidates for Confirmation and Eucharist. Some of the concerns were centered on the fact that another sacrament (Reconciliation) was also being celebrated in the same year. For many parents this seemed overwhelming. Convincing parents and even catechists that the reception of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist is not about knowledge but about initiation is very difficult.

Statement #10 on the survey on the survey states, “Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is based on full understanding of what each sacrament means.” In responding to this statement, 40% either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement while 31% disagree or strongly disagreed. When responding to statement #11 which states that the “reception of the Sacraments of Initiation alleviates any further need for religious formation/education” 84% strongly disagreed or disagreed while less than 1% agreed or strongly agreed.

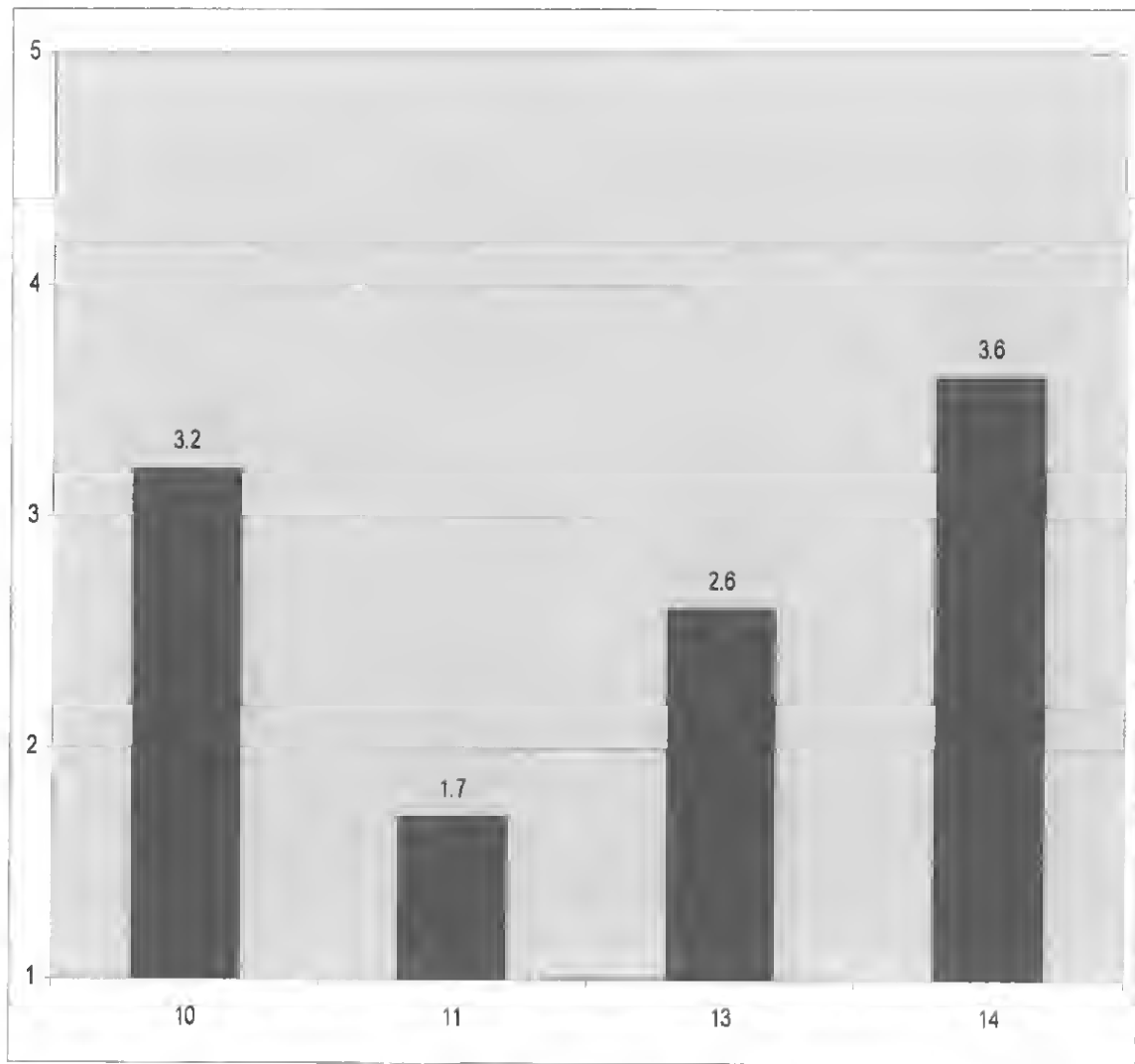
Regarding the celebration of Confirmation and Eucharist at one celebration, statement #13 indicates that “Confirmation happened at the time of First Communion because it was convenient” to which 61% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed while less than 1% strongly agreed or agreed that this was true.

In responding to statement 14 that states “celebrating both sacraments at one Liturgy diminishes the significance of one or both of the sacraments,” 54% strongly



agreed or agreed, while 27% disagreed or strongly disagreed. In comments made regarding this statement, the major concern centered on the fact that Confirmation lost significance in the celebration. Some felt that First Eucharist overshadowed the celebration of the sacraments and that they should be celebrated separately. A few people responded differently because they felt that the celebration linked the two sacraments more closely together and this was apparent in the homily that the presider gave at their child's celebration.

It seems that the understanding of Eucharist being the final sacrament of initiation is understood by many who responded to the survey and offered their comments. It is also apparent that for whatever reason, be it formation issues or the fact of the celebration of Confirmation/Eucharist, many would desire two separate celebrations. Figure 6 plots the responses to statements #10, #11, #13 and #14.

**Figure 6**

Statement 10: Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is based on full understanding of what each sacrament symbolizes.

Statement 11: Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation alleviates any further need for religious formation/ education.

Statement 13: Confirmation happened at First Communion because it was convenient.

Statement 14: Celebrating both sacraments at the same Liturgy diminished the significance of one or both sacraments.

## Summary

This project is a study on the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation and the effects that it has on the understanding of the meaning of Confirmation. The survey, *interviews* conducted and *focus groups* held seem to indicate that participants in the

*Children of Light* process do understand the meaning of the Restored Order. This understanding is more on the intellectual level than on a level of “embracing” the meaning of the Restored Order with its implication for the faith life of the Church.

From conversations and responses provided on the survey, people do “understand” but they are confused. The confusion about the Restored Order comes from their own experience of the sacraments and the meaning of Confirmation as was “taught” to them. When it was pointed out that the Restored Order is actually not new and, in fact, is the tradition of the Church not only in the East but also in the West, and is encouraged in papal documents, people begin to question what they have been taught in their own religious education programs.

People also question why these sacraments are celebrated in different sequences throughout the diocese. This variety of sequences leads to different understandings of these sacraments as initiation rites and, specifically, the meaning of Confirmation. While there is an acceptance of the Restored Order, there is concern about consistency and what is being taught to those preparing for Confirmation and Eucharist.

The question of preparedness for the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist is one that leads to the resistance of accepting the Restored Order. These sacraments have been so strongly linked to catechetical formation that people are still imbued with the belief that they should not be received until one has sufficient knowledge. This may be more true about Confirmation than Eucharist since people seem more comfortable with it being a sacrament of maturity. It is difficult for people to realize that Confirmation is not about one making a decision to believe since that that decision has already been made by parents deciding to have the person baptized as a member of the Church. The need for

candidates to be prepared properly leads to the desire that, while the Restored Order is acceptable, the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist should be separated and celebrated at separate liturgies.

Underlying many of the reservations about the Restored Order and, specifically, the celebration of Confirmation at an early age before Eucharist, is concern that young people will not continue faith formation and remain active in the Church. This concern is real and challenges parishes to develop programs and processes that involve young people in the life of the Church. If this takes place, concern over the age of the celebrating Confirmation may not be an issue.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Pastoral Reflections**

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) has had a great impact on the Church and its mission. The declarations issued by this council challenged the Church to renew itself and to bring the message of Christ to the modern world. After nearly forty years since this historic Council, many Catholics are still having difficulties with the changes initiated and the decisions promulgated by the Council. Historians feel that it may take generations before the renewal called for by the Council takes root in the life of the Church. The implementation of the Restored Order may face the same difficulty of being accepted by members of the Church.

While this study indicates that people have come to understand that Eucharist is the final rite of initiation, there is difficulty in accepting the Restored Order because of the confusion over the meaning of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop Robinson may be correct when he states that there are two “theologies” being taught about Confirmation, one that states Confirmation is about initiation and one that states it is about maturity. The contradictory meanings of Confirmation can only lead to confusion for Catholics and, I believe, the “irrelevance” of Confirmation as evidenced by the fact that some Catholics have not been confirmed and may see no reason to be confirmed. If the Restored Order is to be the norm for the Church, several issues need to be addressed.

#### **Consistency about the “Theology” of the Initiation Sacraments**

The Church must be clear about what it teaches regarding the meaning of the Initiation sacraments, especially Confirmation. There cannot be two meanings for the

same sacrament. This issue will only be solved when leaders teach what the Church says about these rites and follow the proper sequence for their celebration. The consistency of celebrating the proper sequence of the Sacraments of Initiation will lead to acceptance on the part of the community.

### **Catechetical Formation**

There is a need for a constant process of formation regarding the meaning of these sacraments and especially Confirmation for all in the Church. This formation must begin with the leadership in the Church. In the *focus group* held for the staff of Office of Catechetical Services, a participant remarked that the Bishops do not understand Confirmation as initiation and there have been a number of times when a bishop shared his disagreement with the implementation of the Restored Order. The Bishops need to know what the Church says about these sacraments. They are the teachers of the faithful and they must be consistent in what they teach. There is also a need to educate catechists on the meaning of the sacraments and to make certain that they use texts that support the Restored Order. It is important that offices, like the OCS, and Catholic colleges and universities teach the correct meaning of these rites. Finally, it is important that in all programs preparing candidates for reception of the sacraments, a component of the process need be a presentation for adults on the meaning of these sacraments with emphasis on Confirmation.

Strong, comprehensive religious education programs in parishes will help alleviate the fear that people will not sufficiently understand the teachings of the Church. Faith formation takes places on all levels in the life of the Christian. Religious formation

is not completed when one graduates from an institution or has received certain sacraments. It is a life journey of formation. Parishes need to establish programs for all age groups. Programs like *Generation of Faith* involve the entire family and the entire community in the learning process. Formation programs for the sacraments should be family centered, involving all members in the process including godparents and extended family members. Adult education programs are vital for enriching the faith life of the community.

### **Involvement of young people**

The third issue that must be addressed is the involvement of young people in the Church. Parents are greatly concerned that young people will not remain active in the Church if confirmed at an early age. This is a legitimate concern. Often programs for Confirmation have been used as a way to keep young people involved which, at times, has led to the mistaken notion that once confirmed the person has attained the knowledge needed to be a good Catholic. Parishes need to establish programs that will keep young people involved in the Church. These programs should be family centered, especially for younger children, and they should also be programs of youth ministry that involve young adults in the liturgical, social, educational, and service aspects of the Church. We need to stop using reception of the sacraments as enticements or ploys to keep young people involved. If the parish is welcoming and encouraging of the involvement of young people, they will remain and find their place among others in the Church.

It may take more creativity on the part of parishes but it can be done. James A Wilde<sup>1</sup> suggests that parishes find opportunities to celebrate moments in the lives of young people when they make decisions regarding life and faith. He states that these moments are not just about faith but may be about times when they are going through transitions in life such as at times like graduation or beginning college or taking on the responsibility of work. The parish needs to recognize these times, acknowledge, and affirm young people. This same recognition of the maturity and gifts of young persons can be celebrated when they become involved in the Church as members of pastoral councils, as readers and extraordinary ministers of Communion, as music ministers and as leaders of retreat programs.

### **The role of the Bishop**

The Bishop is the chief shepherd and teacher of the diocese. It is his role to preside at Confirmation. If the Restored Order is to be accepted then it is important that the Bishop preside at Confirmation when celebrated at First Eucharist. Several times respondents to the survey expressed confusion over the role of the Bishop. One person stated that if the Bishop was present when the older candidates were confirmed, he needed to be present for those confirmed in the Restored Order. His lack of presence will lead to the problem that existed in former times when presbyters replaced the role of Bishop as Ordinary minister of Confirmation and his role was lost.

While the role of the Bishop presiding at Confirmation is important, so is his role as teacher and leader determining the sequence of Sacraments of Initiation. The

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<sup>1</sup> James A. Wilde (ed.), *Confirmed as Children, Affirmed as Adults* (Chicago: Liturgical Training Program, 1990).



importance of consistency is needed in the Church that people may understand what these sacraments communicate.

While I fully support the Restored Order, I do have a concern that it is parishes making the decision as to the sequence that is being followed. The Catholic Church is not “congregational” (e.g. ecclesial policy is determined by the local congregation) and authority rests with the Bishop. Allowing parishes to determine the sequence of the rites yields different theologies, regarding Confirmation and Eucharist, and subsequently confusion regarding the proper order of the sacraments. It may appear that the Bishop is not exercising his proper authority by not setting the proper sequence, thus giving the impression that the Restored Order is just another option. I believe that it should not be the decision of the parish to decide the implementation of the Restored Order. This policy may do more harm than good. It is the role of the Bishop to make that decision and to provide the leadership and the vision for the parishes in his care.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This project has been an interesting experience. I have witnessed people “grappling” with the issues that the Restored Order presents and especially concerning Confirmation. It has also been very encouraging to see the importance of faith for so many and the concern they have regarding the involvement of young people in the life of the Church. The staff and the parishioners have challenged each other and, I believe, have grown from the experience. Personally, I am more convinced than ever that the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation should be the norm for the Church. It

speaks volumes to who we are as we ritually accompany members to the “Table” in order to work as a community of believers that brings the Good News to all.

Has this project been successful? My answer is yes and no. It has been successful as far as the fact that people are slowly coming to understand the Restored Order and many have accepted it.

It has not been successful because it may take years for people to come and see this sequence as the ordinary way in which these sacraments are to be celebrated. As long as there are different sequences and different meanings attributed to these sacraments, it will be difficult for Catholics to accept the Restored Order. Until the Restored Order is understood as having roots founded in our Tradition and is the “norm” for celebrating these rites, it will not be fully embraced by members of the Church.

Amen!

## Appendix A

This appendix contains materials used in the formation process for the parish prior to implementation of the Restored Order.

### **Guidelines for Pilot Parishes**

Parishes requesting approval to pilot Confirmation at First Eucharist must first contact Joyce M. Kelleher, Director of the Office of Catechetical Services for a preliminary consultation.

#### **Catechetical consultants will provide:**

- Assistance in developing a plan of implementation
- Training and resources for sacrament preparation
- Networking opportunities with other pilot parishes
- Support throughout the process
- Evaluation Tools

#### **Prior to approval as a pilot, parishes must demonstrate and document:**

- Attentiveness to the quality of liturgical celebrations including preaching.
- Understanding of and commitment to the vision and process of the Rite of Christian initiation of Adults.
- Mutually cooperative school and parish catechetical programs that are integrated into the wider mission of the parish.
- Understanding of sacrament preparation as a process distinct from religious instruction.
- Effective consultative practices within the parish.
- Sufficient and appropriately trained personnel to implement the process.
- A professional staff that is comfortable with collaboration, flexibility, and learning from experience.
- A community of hospitality that welcomes new participants into activities and ministries.
- Youth ministry opportunities through high school.

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**Confirmation/Eucharist Process  
Strategic Plan  
Holy Cross Parish  
Euclid**

**2000**

- Summer*  
8/15/00 Consideration of Proposal  
Meeting with entire Staff and Joyce Kelleher
- Fall  
Entered into process considering Proposal  
Meetings with Parish Council  
Meeting with School Faculty  
10/18/00 Diocesan Meeting on Adult Faith Formation  
11/19/00 Meeting with parishes re: Confirmation/Eucharist Proposal  
(task: to prepare strategic plan before 3/7/01)

**2001**

- Winter*  
2/21/01 Diocesan Meeting re: Preparation for Sacraments  
3/07/01 Diocesan Meeting re: Confirmation/Eucharist Proposal  
(review strategic plans, impact on Youth Ministry)
- Present First Eucharist preparation
- Incorporation of children's catechumenate
  - Sessions and Rituals involving candidates, families, godparents, grandparents
  - Stronger emphasis on symbols of Initiation
- Write and submit a proposal for funding of materials, resources, and possible a salary for an additional staff member.  
(submitted 2-22-01)

*Spring/Summer*

- Formation of a Study Group (*4 sessions in May and June*)  
Development of five sub-committees (*Pre-and Post Baptism, Formation of Adults, Confirmation, Confirmation and Eucharist, Youth Ministry*)  
Development of designs for present Eucharist, present Confirmation, and future Confirmation/Eucharist processes (*create common foundational pieces: such as use of Scripture particularly lectionary-based, ritual elements, involvement of family, godparents, wider community, service*)
- Development of catechetical materials for parishioners, Parents/guardians, catechists

*(historical overview, bulletin inserts, common questions/answers, timeline, etc.)*

Meet with all involved to explain proposal, process; ask for input, suggestions, etc.

Further develop youth ministry for junior and senior high young people

Schedule program on the Spirituality of Children, especially for parents, godparents, grandparents, catechists, all involved and interested in the faith life of children

Set time line for next five years

Set time for visit of Bishop Pilla with all those celebrating sacraments in Easter season

Development of Pre-Baptism/Post-Baptism ministries of parish

Gatherings of parents before/after Baptism

Catechesis on Initiation Sacraments

Ways parish can support parents and young families

Outreach at anniversaries of Baptism, etc.

*Fall Implementations...*

*Winter*

Formation of Power Point Presentation

Programs for pre and post Baptism preparation

Formation of group to focus on pre- and post- Baptism catechesis (Oct 3)

Development of Pre-Baptism/Post Baptism ministries of Parish

Gatherings of parents before/after Baptism (Dec. 2...)

Catechesis on Initiation Sacraments

Ways parish can support parents and young families

Outreach at anniversaries of Baptism, etc.

Education components

24 October "Course on the Sacraments" by Fr. McNulty (5 sessions)  
(part of Diocesan certification process)

30 October Program on "The Spirituality of Children" presented by Mrs. Joyce Kelleher especially for parents, godparents, grandparents, catechists, all involved and interested in the faith life of children

5 November Presentation for PSR catechists

14 November Presentation for Holy Cross School faculty

30 January Presentation for parents of HC day school and PSR, and any other interested parishioners

20 February "History of the Sacrament of Confirmation"  
(Fr. Mike Woost)

Parish *Crossroads* Newsletter (January/February issue)

Rationale

Involvement with the diocese

What being a pilot parish means

What this would look like over the coming years

What ministry to youth and families will look like

Challenge for Youth Ministry

Announcements of coming program, talks, opportunities, etc.

Present preparations for Confirmation and Eucharist

With adaptations making a transition to new model

*Spring* Celebrations for Confirmation and Eucharist in early April

13 May Meet with parents of children in grades 2, 7, and 8  
to share program for 2002-2003  
“Children of Light” (grade 2, older brothers and sisters)  
“Gifts of the Spirit” (grades 7 and 8)

**Time Line**

*The sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist will be celebrated during the Easter season of each year. Our hope is to have a common reception with the Bishop during this season as well for all those who have celebrated the Easter Sacraments.*

2002	Celebration of Confirmation for grade 8 Celebration of Eucharist for grade 2
2003	Celebration of Confirmation for grades 7 & 8 Celebration of Confirmation/Eucharist for grade 2 Gathering with Bishop
2004	Celebration of Confirmation for grade 6 & 7 Celebration for Confirmation/Eucharist for grade 2 Gathering with the Bishop
2005	Celebration of Confirmation for grade 6 Celebration of Confirmation/Eucharist for grade 2 Gathering with Bishop
2006	Celebration of Confirmation/Eucharist for grade 2 Gathering with Bishop

## *Rationale for Confirmation with First Eucharist*

### **Holy Cross Parish**

#### ***Euclid OH***

As Catholics we understand that there are seven sacraments. We know their names and have learned their purposes. What might be less clear is that three of those seven sacraments bear a special relationship to each other. Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist together form the process of Christian Initiation, that process by which a person becomes a member of the Church. This special association among these three sacraments has been present from the earliest centuries of the Church. Men and women who came to see that God was calling them to accept Jesus were prepared over a period of years to understand the significance of that call. Then, at one liturgy on the vigil of Easter, they were baptized with water, confirmed with the oil of salvation, and invited for the first time to share in the body and blood of Christ.

Over the passage of time the dynamic connection among these three sacraments was lost. As children were baptized as infants, Confirmation and Eucharist were delayed to a later time, often separated from each other both by time and significance. Eucharist, which is the sacrament that celebrates the completion and fullness of initiation, was often celebrated before Confirmation. Moreover, the crucial reality that these three sacraments were intended to support and enable a human and divine process by which a person became fully integrated into the Church, the Body of Christ, slipped from view. These three sacraments continued to be honored as special moments with God. People understood that it was "time to have my child baptized," "time to make first Eucharist," "time to be confirmed," but now these sacraments were seen in a way which isolated them from each other and from the vital process of growth and conversion which was meant to form active and conscious Christians.

With the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) was revived within the Catholic Church. In that Rite, the interconnection of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist was re-emphasized and re-integrated into a process of growth and conversion. No longer were adults who wished to become Christian instructed privately by a priest for a few sessions and then baptized. Rather, those who desired baptism were drawn together into a communal journey in which spiritual experiences were shared and faith was nourished. Then, at the Easter Vigil, Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist were celebrated as part of a single liturgy. The revival of the RCIA has caused profound changes in our Church. Those who have participated in it can testify to its power to change lives. The effectiveness of the three sacraments of initiation has been rediscovered by those who have celebrated them as part of a process of spiritual growth and discovery.

As the impact of the RCIA has been appreciated, there has formed within the Church a desire to extend its benefits to children who are to be initiated into the Catholic community. The ancient practice of baptizing infants is well established within our Church. Given this practice, various approaches are being explored by which infant Baptism can be more clearly connected to both Confirmation and Eucharist as well as reintegrated into a larger process of faith development.

Bishop Pilla has approved one such approach for the Diocese of Cleveland. Parishes who desire are able to implement this approach within their communities. Holy Cross has been approved to be one of those parishes.

In the approach available to us, infant Baptism would mark the beginning of a process in which parents of the baptized child grow in faith with their child, with other parents, and with other members of the Holy Cross community. Emphasis on this process would be not simply on education but on a deeper identity and involvement in the life of the parish community. Children would not simply discover that in the second grade it is "the time to make first Eucharist", but would grow aware of a connectedness to a parish community, to its people and its mission.

Then, around the age of eight years, the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist would be celebrated together, completing the process of initiation. Of course it would be necessary to assist these fully initiated children as they grow in their faith as older children, adolescents, and adults. Holy Cross would continue to support this development through education efforts through Holy Cross School and the Parish School of Religion, and the social activities and services provided through our youth ministry, and our ministry to families at all ages and stages of development.

This approach of uniting the three sacraments of initiation in a process of faith development has the potential of increasing the power of the sacraments in the lives of our children, their parents and our entire community. The staff of Holy Cross recommends that our parish community utilize this opportunity to re-order and re-invigorate the celebration of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist for the children of our parish. We sense profoundly the challenge it offers our parish community to be present, meaningful and spiritually relevant to children and parents. We sense the advantage of attending to more than a "sacramental moment", and to be carefully nurturing of the ongoing catechesis of all our individuals and families. We find a picture that encourages all members of our community to see their roles as prayerful supports and witnesses to a lived faith, and encourages all of us to work together with a common vision of enriching our parish life.



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CONFIRMATION AND FIRST EUCHARIST**

### **1. How are the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist related?**

All three sacraments are part of one initiation process which begins in Baptism, is sealed in Confirmation, and culminates in First Eucharist. In the celebration of these three rituals a person becomes a member of the Church. First Eucharist completes the initiation process. By sharing in the Table the baptized fully exercise their membership in the Church.

### **2. Is the celebration of Confirmation before First Eucharist a new concept in the Church?**

During the first few centuries of the Church when a person was baptized, they were confirmed and admitted to Eucharist at the same celebration at Easter. In the middle ages, for a variety of reasons, Confirmation became separated in time from Baptism. However, even then, Confirmation was seen as an initiation sacrament and was normally celebrated before the reception of the Eucharist. In 1910 because of certain pastoral situations, Pius X approved the reception of early First Eucharist even if a person had not been confirmed. This practice was viewed as an exception at that time. In 1960, in calling for a reform of the rites of initiation, the Vatican Council urged that the "intimate connection Confirmation has with the whole of Christian initiation be more clearly set forth." Today, when a child of catechetical age is to be baptized, the Church states that the child should be confirmed and admitted to First Eucharist in the same ceremony. So, celebrating Confirmation before First Eucharist is not a new idea in the Church but part of our deepest tradition.

### **3. At what age should a child be confirmed or receive First Eucharist?**

According to the official documents of the Church, the age for Confirmation and First Eucharist is the same. The Rite of Confirmation gives the age of Confirmation as "about the seventh year." The Revised Code of Canon Law states "Confirmation is to be conferred on the faithful about the age of discretion." In speaking of the Eucharist, the Code says that "children who have reached the use of reason" may be admitted to Eucharist.

**4. How do I know if my child is ready for Confirmation and First Eucharist?**

If a baptized child of catechetical age is growing up in a home where the faith of the parents is expressed in personal prayer, regular worship with a parish community, and in a life lived in accordance with Gospel values, then that child is ready for these sacraments. The purpose of the sacramental program is to help the children and parents prepare for this initiation event. A child's readiness for initiation is not a matter of religious instruction. That is why preparation for these sacraments does not take place in our parish religious education programs. Once a child is confirmed and receives First Eucharist (this is initiation, the beginning) he or she must continue to grow in faith. That is when parish religious education programs and youth ministry come into play.

**5. But doesn't my child have to know more in order to be ready for Confirmation?**

There is no difference in the personal readiness of a candidate for Confirmation or First Eucharist. In fact, readiness for Confirmation is spoken of as the criterion of readiness for First Eucharist. The idea that the sacrament of Confirmation presupposes greater maturity than the sacrament of Baptism or First Eucharist is without support in church documents or Vatican II reform. In celebrating initiation sacraments, readiness is always relative and takes different shapes depending on the age and condition of the candidates.

**6. If Confirmation is received at an early age, will my child at adolescence be missing an important step in their religious formation?**

The Church understands Confirmation as an initiation rite, not as a ritual to foster adolescent commitment. However, what underlies this question is the larger issue. When does a person who was baptized as an infant own his or her own faith? There is not a set age at which the interiorization of faith takes place. For one person it may be at age twenty and for another at age fifty. All we know is that faith development is a gradual process intimately connected with a person's growth toward adulthood. Given the nature of adolescence and how a person's faith develops, it may not be prudent to use Confirmation as an adult commitment rite at adolescence. Faith development of adolescents is characterized by exploration, search and doubt, not firm commitment. However, parents and our parish community need to explore ways, other than Confirmation, to help adolescents in their faith development and growth toward Christian maturity.

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## Bulletin Announcements

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### Toward an Understanding of the Re-Ordering of the Sacraments of Initiation (I)

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Let's start with a personal question! When were you confirmed? What did you think your Confirmation was about?

Some of us were confirmed in the third grade ... some in the eighth grade ... some in junior high or senior high ... some even as adults. And, yes, for some we were confirmed at our Baptism if we entered the church through the Catechumenate or if we were raised in an Eastern or Orthodox tradition. Even in our own experiences, it is difficult to locate a universal age for Confirmation. What did we think it was all about? Some of us were taught that we were becoming a "soldier for Christ". Some of us were taught that we are making an adult choice for Jesus. How are third graders "soldiers"? How are eighth graders "adult"? How can we explain the variety of ages and descriptions?

An answer can be found in the history of the Sacrament. Confirmation in the early Church was the anointing done by the Bishop as part of the Initiation of new members into the Church. After the person was baptized by triple *immersion* ("In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit...") in the waters of the font, he or she would be clothed in a white garment and the Bishop who presided at the Baptism would anoint the newly baptized person with oil in thanksgiving. Then those who were newly baptized and anointed would join the rest of the community and receive Eucharist for the first time. Eucharist had always been seen as the conclusion of the Initiation process. Thus, originally, the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist together were the Sacraments of Initiation and they were celebrated as part of one ceremony.

As the Church grew, Bishops could no longer be present at every Baptism, so they began to delegate priests to baptize in their place. In the Eastern parts of the Church, Bishops also delegated priests to anoint after the Baptism. To this day in the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Orthodox Churches, Confirmation is celebrated by the priest immediately after the Baptism. In the Western or Roman Church (of which we are a part), Bishops decided to delegate priests only to baptize and retained Confirmation for themselves. Although this decision was motivated by good pastoral reasons (so that Bishops might retain a personal contact with the baptized), it also made Confirmation dependent upon when the Bishop would visit the newly baptized. Tied now to the Bishop's arrival, Confirmation began to be celebrated years after Baptism and even years after First Eucharist, which is the conclusion of the Initiation process. As Confirmation became separated from Baptism and Eucharist, its role as an Initiation Sacrament was lost.

The Church found itself with a variety of ages and understandings of Confirmation. In 1963, the Bishops of the world at the Second Vatican Council mandated that

Confirmation be reviewed in such a way as to reclaim its status as a Sacrament of Initiation. (See the Constitution on the Liturgy, #71) For the last thirty years, Bishops and parishes have been exploring how this can be done. What has become clear is that the original “order” of the three initiating sacraments must be restored, i.e. Confirmation should be celebrated before the reception of Eucharist. That is why Holy Cross, together with other parishes of our diocese, plans to begin confirming our young people before their First Eucharist. For unless we were to adopt the practice of the Eastern Churches and confirm at Baptism (which has been excluded as an option by the Bishops of the Roman Church) or move the time of First Eucharist to junior high or high school (a move which would have few supporters), this seems to be the best means to restore the original order of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist and re-establish Confirmation as an Initiation sacrament.

After tracing this historical development, a number of questions remain. Is a second grader mature enough to receive Confirmation? Will we lose an opportunity to minister to our young people if Confirmation is moved out of the eighth grade? These are important questions and subsequent columns will address the spiritual meaning of Confirmation when it is celebrated as part of First Eucharist.

### *Toward an Understanding of the Re-Ordering of the Sacraments of Initiation (II)*

In the former article, you read about the history of the Sacrament of Initiation in an attempt to explain how Confirmation began to be celebrated after First Eucharist instead of prior to it, which was the original “order”. The Second Vatican Council directs us to understand Confirmation as an Initiation sacrament. Celebrating it after Baptism and before Eucharist is central to reclaiming this significance. It is for this reason that we, together with other parishes of the Diocese of Cleveland, plan to celebrate Confirmation with those children who are preparing for their First Eucharist in Spring of 2003.

This raises a number of questions in peoples’ minds. In the discussion with our Parish Pastoral Council, the Study Group formed of teachers, catechists and other parishioners, and several other groups of parents and parishioners with whom we met in exploring this decision, three important questions kept emerging.

The first question is: *“Is an eight year old mature enough to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation?”* We believe that this question is being asked in recent times because we have explained the Sacrament of Confirmation as our opportunity to make an adult commitment to Christ. When seen in this way, it is clear that a second grader is not ready to make such a commitment. Yet, when Confirmation is understood as a Sacrament of Initiation, this concern disappears. What we celebrate in Confirmation and in all Initiation sacraments is not our choice of God, but God’s choice of us.

These sacraments are not primarily about our decision but about God's grace. That is why we are able to celebrate Baptism shortly after birth and the fullness of Initiation, the Eucharist, around the age of seven or eight years. Even though infants have no personal awareness of God and second graders still have many years to reach maturity, we can still celebrate their Initiation because it is not their choice that is central. The loving and believing communities of their families and their church recognize God's choice of them and celebrate it in Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist. As children mature in these communities they will in time come to respond to God's choice of them. But God's choice is first.

In Catholic theology, the sacraments celebrate God's action. What follows is our response. But that response is difficult to schedule. Some of us make our deepest choice for God as teens, others in mid-life, still others in our later years. That is why there is no problem having a person fully initiated in second grade. For all us will spend the rest of our lives choosing and re-choosing to respond to God's choice of us.

The second question that arose in our discussion is: *"Will we lose an important opportunity to minister to our youth if Confirmation is moved out of eighth grade?"* This is a very valid question, and there is no doubt that some teens only come to church or stay in religious formation in order to be confirmed. However, the moving of Confirmation does not mean the end of ministry for and with youth. Bishop Pilla has insisted that any parish that celebrates Confirmation before First Eucharist must have a viable youth program in place. This would include continued religious experiences in our day school and Parish School of Religion as well as opportunities for all young people and families through the Family Experiences offered each year. In fact, several new and exciting opportunities in youth ministry can be offered once we begin to work with young people who become involved freely rather than because they have to "make their Confirmation." In the future, we hope to offer a variety of flexible spiritual, social and service opportunities along with the encourage for our teens to reach out to their peers and invite them to become involved. It is likely that some teens will choose not to respond to these offers because we do not have the requirement that they do this in order to be confirmed. But, as long as we offer the best youth ministry we can, we believe it is better to respect their decision of whether they wish to respond rather than using Confirmation as a means to push them to do so. We need to honor peoples' decisions of when and how they will respond to God. Some of us are not ready until later in life.

The final question that arose was: *"Does this mean that what I was taught about Confirmation was wrong?"* The answer is No! It was not wrong, but it could be more complete. If you were taught that you were making a choice for Jesus, this is true. Every sacrament invites us to respond to God's gift to the level we are able. But as a Sacrament of Initiation, the primary focus in Confirmation is on God, not on us. If you were taught you were becoming a soldier of Christ, it is true that we must stand up for what we believe. But, again, the emphasis is upon how God gives us the gifts of the Spirit to do this, and those gifts can be given even before we are fully able to use them.

As the Church moves through history, we continue to find better ways to understand the mystery of God's love and the gift of the sacraments. We believe that celebrating Confirmation before First Eucharist will indeed emphasize the primacy of God's action and at the same time call us to be a community that will encourage a full response to that love at every stage of life in grade school, in adolescence, and in adult years.

In fact, the change in our understanding of Confirmation has invited us into a deeper appreciation of what all the sacraments of our Church are about. In our next column, we hope to explain how this change can have a bearing on every member of our parish and lead to a spiritual renewal of our community.

### *Toward an Understanding of the Re-Ordering of the Sacraments of Initiation (III)*

The two preceding articles have attempted to explain both the history and rationale for the decision of our parish to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation before First Eucharist. However, in reaching this decision through discussions with the Bishop, the parish staff, the Parish Pastoral Council, members of the Study Group that met earlier this spring and summer, and representative members of our parish, an important and powerful realization emerged. It is that realization that we want to share with you this week.

As we examined the true nature of Confirmation as an Initiation sacrament, it became clear that a deeper appreciation of the sacraments had the potential of re-shaping who we see ourselves to be for one another and of igniting a spiritual renewal of our parish.

To explain this, we ask you to reflect on an experience that most of us have witnessed: our parish celebration of First Eucharist. As we see the children come forward, no one can deny their excitement, their joy, their openness to God. As we stated in an earlier article, the sacraments are primarily about God's choice of us. For this reason, the joy, excitement, and openness in our second graders make them truly ready to receive God's gift. At the same time that we recognize their openness and excitement, we also know that they are still young and have much to learn. Yet this need to grow does not concern us because we know that their families will guide and support them in the years ahead. In other words, we recognize that this moment of first Eucharist is part of a larger process of discovery, and that these young people will not have to face that process alone.

It is essential for us as a parish to understand that this same process of discovery and support applies to all the sacraments. Sacraments are not isolated events. They are part of an ongoing life in Christ. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist are more than moments. They are focus points in an ongoing life of grace and response, failure and recovery. We must begin to see the sacraments as parts of this ongoing life. Therefore,

when parents say, "We want our child to make First Eucharist", it is essential that they see their request as more than preparing for a "moment." The real question is what kind of life is present before and after that moment. For all of that life is also part of the sacrament. That is why we as a parish must be and will be committed to find better ways to support parents in living out their faith in their homes. For it is in the lived faith of the family before and after Baptism, before and after Confirmation and Eucharist which completes the sacraments and allows them to reach their full potential. One of our expressed goals for future ministry in our parish is to design ways to encourage parents to be leaders of faith in their families.

But this role of guidance and support is not limited just to parents. We believe that all the sacraments are actions of the Church. We are the Church! Therefore each one of us is part of every sacrament celebrated in our community. When we see someone baptized, confirmed, or making their first Eucharist, it is incomplete to think they are "getting the sacrament." What they are getting is US! Each sacrament celebrated binds us closer to each other and reaffirms the common life in Christ we share. That is why it is wrong to think that "those" children are preparing for confirmation. Those children are "our" children. We are a part of their life and their sacrament. The fullness of their sacraments depends on the way a local community lives its common life in Christ, proclaiming his word and caring for each other in Christ's name. If we are a weak community, the impact of the sacraments will be lessened. If we are an active and caring community, the sacraments we celebrate can reach their full potential.

There are tremendous implications to this understanding of the sacraments. That is why we must not think that a deepening of our appreciation of the sacraments will affect only those who have yet to receive them. A deeper appreciation will affect us all. We are convinced that if we can truly appreciate how we are sacraments for each other, we will be able to renew and deepen our community life.

## Appendix B

This appendix contains materials used in the *Children of Light* to prepare candidates for Confirmation and First Communion.

### Children of Light

- Family Interviews (between August 15 and September 15)

Please contact the Parish Office (486-0850) to schedule an appointment with one of the following people:

Fr. John McNulty	Fr. Bill Bouhall
Sister Kathleen Flannery	Mrs. Danni Hubbard

- Blessing for all preparing for the Confirmation and Communion on September 21/22 at all the Liturgies

- Family Scrapbook and Activities

- An Action of Service (“Serve with Love”)

- Family Sessions (7-8 pm in Church and the parish hall)

Wed., Sept. 25	“Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus” <i>Please bring your family.</i>
Wed., Nov. 13	“Remembering Who We Are and Whose We Are” <i>Please bring your godparents or other significant adult in your family.</i>
Mon., Jan. 20	“We Are A Community of the Spirit” <i>Please bring the person you have chosen to be your sponsor for Confirmation (see “Godparent/Sponsor” sheet).</i>
Wed., Feb. 12	“Memories and Traditions” <i>Please bring your grandparents or other significant older adult in your family.</i>

- Reconciliation Service with all families preparing for Confirmation and Communion on Monday, March 10, 2003

- Family Retreat on Saturday, April 5, 2003

- Celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Communion during the Easter Season (*the first 2 weekends in May*)

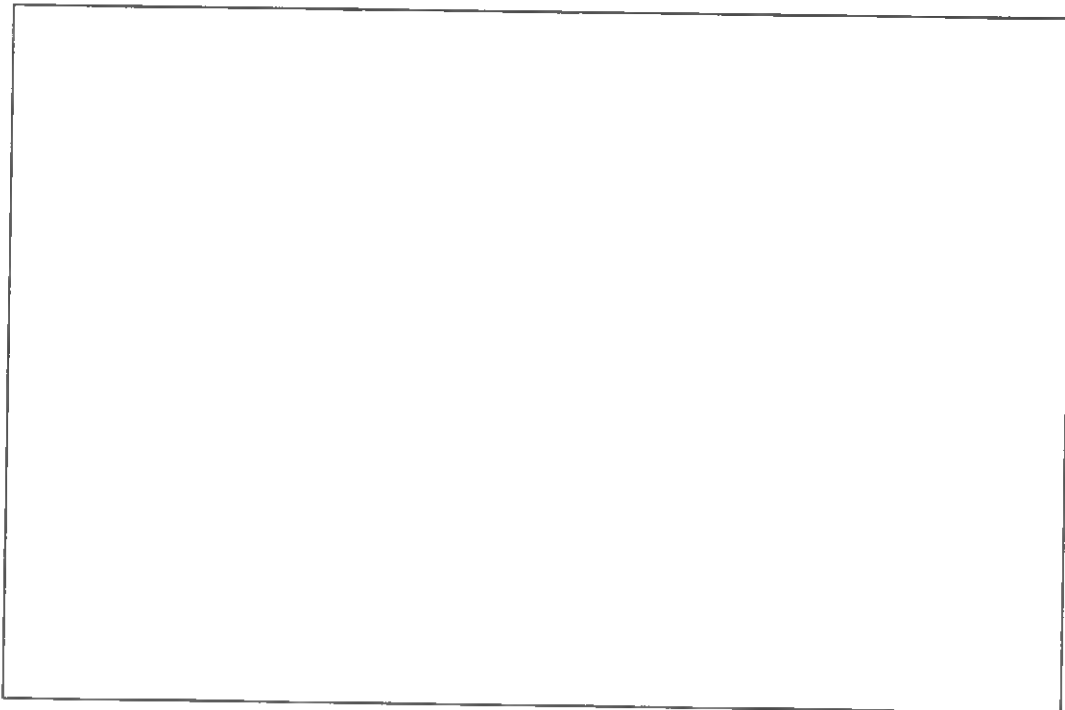
Gathering with Bishop Pilla on Wednesday, May 21, at 7:00 p.m. for all those celebrating Sacraments of Initiation this year.



# *My Sacrament Scrapbook*

by

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This special book is a way of remembering many important times in my journey of faith with Jesus, my family, and my parish community.

**This year as I prepare for the celebration of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Communion, I will share in a number of very special events with my family and community.**

A special family interview

Family Sessions

*“Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus”*

“Remembering Who We Are and Whose We Are”

“We are a Community of the Spirit”

“Memories and Traditions”

Generations of Faith Gatherings

Actions of Service

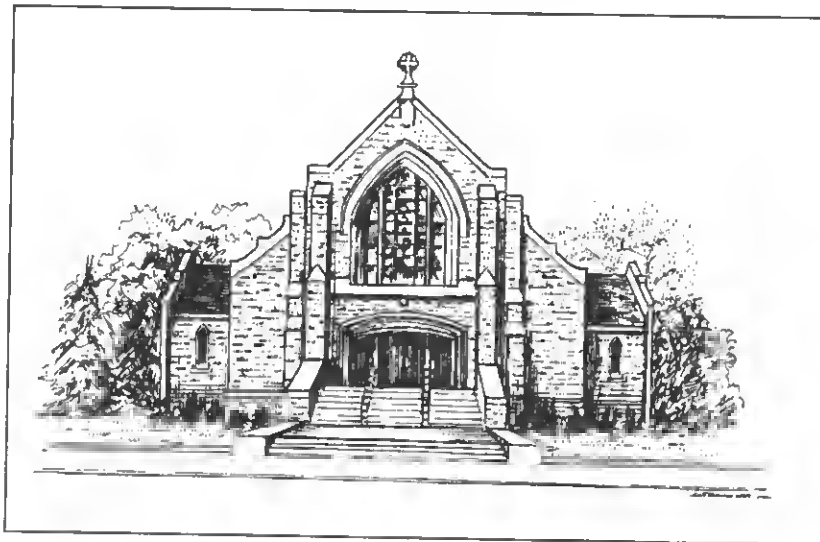
Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation

A Family Retreat

The celebrations of the Sacraments of Confirmation and Communion during the Easter Season

My family and I belong to *Holy Cross Parish*.

This is a picture of my parish church that is located at the corner of Lake Shore Boulevard and East 200 Street in Euclid, Ohio.



These are some of the people who are part of my family's life in our parish:

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## **These are some of the things my family and I do here at our Parish**

Check the ones in which you have taken part! (If there are any that you have not experienced, and would like to, mark them in a different way and watch the parish bulletin or ask someone at the parish about how to participate.)

- ☐ Liturgy on Saturday evening or Sunday mornings
- ☐ Bringing up the gifts of bread and wine at Mass
- ☐ Children's Liturgy of the Word during 9:30 and 11:30 Mass
- ☐ Advent Family Night
- ☐ Advent Giving Tree
- ☐ St. Nicholas celebration
- ☐ Lent Family Night
- ☐ Lent Brown Bag Project
- ☐ Operation Rice Bowl
- ☐ Baby Corner project
- ☐ Donating food for the needy
- ☐ Blessing of Animals on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi
- ☐ Student at Holy Cross School
- ☐ Student at Holy Cross Parish School of Religion
- ☐ Preschool program on Sunday during 9:30 Mass

## My Celebration of Baptism

I was baptized at \_\_\_\_\_

in \_\_\_\_\_,

on \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_.

My godparents are:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

(You can add a copy of your Baptismal certificate to your Scrapbook if you would like!)

Please ask your parents and other family members to share these memories with you ...

Why did my parents have me baptized?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is my full name? and why did I receive this name?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Why were my godparents chosen?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What did I wear? \_\_\_\_\_

Who was there?

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How did our family celebrate my Baptism?

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What memories do they have of this Baptism day?

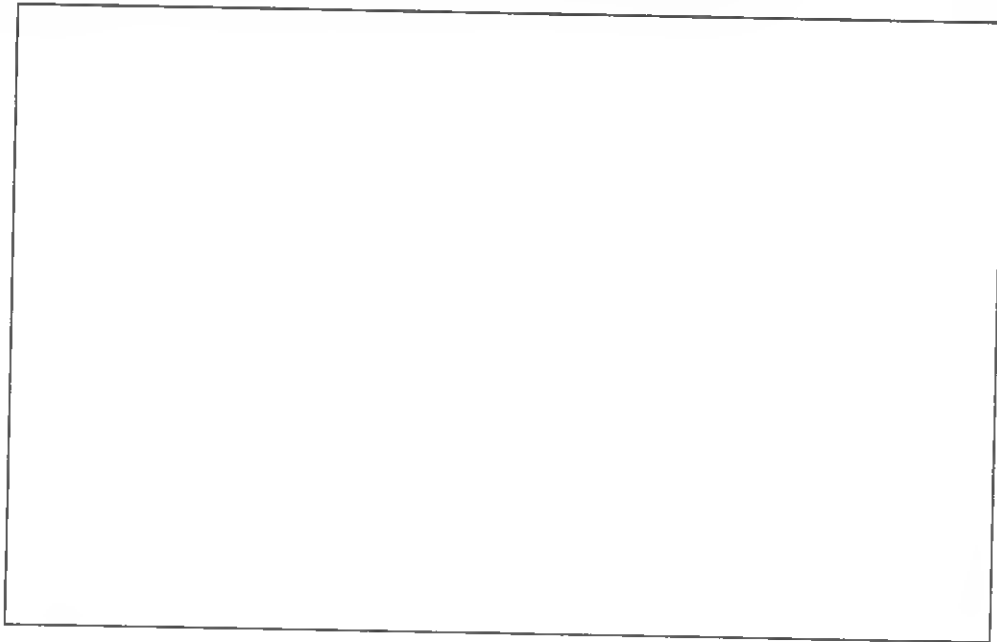
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(You might want to ask your godparents or someone else present at the Baptism to write their thoughts down, and you can include them in the scrapbook.)



**Who we are!**

*Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus*



Do this page after our Family Session!

*Jesus invites us into a way of disciple-ship, of sharing his mission to "Serve with Love" the needs of God's people.*

*What does walking with Jesus look like for me and my family? Choose an action or project to do together as part of your preparation for the sacraments of Confirmation and Communion. You might want to select one "in parish" activity and one "out of parish" activity.*

*We chose to do together:*

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*Write down any insights or comments about what it means to follow in the steps of Jesus in serving others: (everyone contributes to this part!)*

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*Remembering Who We Are and Whose We Are*



*Do this page after the Family Session!*



This is my table and I am glad it is ours!  
These are what make us "rich" ...

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\_\_\_\_\_ We heard this story tonight:

The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor

After the Memories and Traditions Family Session:

We heard the story: Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox  
*Invite your family and those who share this special year with you  
to reflect on **What Is A Memory?** for you.*

Something warm	Something that makes you happy or sad
Something from long ago	Something precious as gold

When Jesus shares his very self with us in the Eucharist, we too share in his very life - full of love, with us in sorrow and joy, long ago and yet today, and far more precious than the finest gold.



*If you have already made your First Communion and are sharing in the preparation for Confirmation with your brother or sister ...*

*Look for your First Communion Scrapbook! You will be receiving materials to add to your scrapbook throughout this year! You might also want to add some things on your own, or new ideas or thoughts as they come to mind.*

*If you still have your banner from First Communion, please find it and set it aside until the Family Retreat. You will be adding some symbols to include the sacrament of Confirmation.*

*If you made First Communion at another parish, try to find any mementos of that celebration and include them in your Sacrament Scrapbook.*

*You already have a special relationship with the people in your family. We hope this year will make it even more special as you come to know God's love in many more ways as you grow in "wisdom, age and grace."*

*On this page are some questions for you to think about. You might want to ask a parent or other adult to help you.*

*From my own preparation for First Communion, my favorite part was:*

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*What have I learned about my faith since making First Communion?*

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*What advice would I give to my younger brother or sister preparing for Confirmation and First Communion?*

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## *The Gifts of the Spirit*



### ***The Spirit of Wisdom***

*A wise person knows God holds together all that is.*

*A wise Christian seeks to love others as Jesus loves us.*

*A person I know who is wise: \_\_\_\_\_.*

*A person who teaches me about all that is: \_\_\_\_\_.*

*A person who sees what is special about me: \_\_\_\_\_.*



### ***The Spirit of Understanding***

*An understanding person wants to know how others think and feel, especially when they feel hurt, sad, or angry. We learn what others think by listening to them and by trying to put ourselves in their places.*

*Give a brother or sister (or friend) the gift of listening for a whole minute without interrupting.*

*Take time at a meal to ask family members how each feels.*



### ***The Spirit of Knowledge***

*Knowledge comes from learning all we can about the world we live in and about God who loves us. What can our family learn about God?*

*What is God like in Psalm 23? \_\_\_\_\_*

*In Matthew 6:25-33? \_\_\_\_\_*

*What does our family know about our Church?*

*Our bishop is: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Our pastor is: \_\_\_\_\_*

*A lector in our parish is: \_\_\_\_\_*



### ***The Spirit of Courage***

*The spirit of courage is for standing up for what is right even when others don't. Courage is for making a friend of someone others leave out. Courage is wanting what is right for all the people God likes. That's everybody!*

What takes courage for a child to do?

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Who has courage in your family?

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### ***The Spirit of Right Judgment***

*A judgment is a decision or choice. A right judgment is a loving and fair choice. Jesus teaches us to love one another and to follow God's law when we make choices. Take turns in your family to answer the following:*

*When do I choose to help others?*

*When do I decide to do my best?*

*When is judging what is right hard?*



### ***The Spirit of Fear of the Lord (some call this the Spirit of Wonder and Awe)***

*What in God's world amazes you? Write or draw what in creation makes you wonder about God.*



### ***The Spirit of Reverence***

*Reverence is a spirit of praising and thanking God. A reverent person knows God gives us our world and our lives as gifts. A reverent person respects God, nature, and people. A reverent person talks to God often like a friend. Trace your hand on another paper. Write in the fingers things and people you are thankful to God for. Write in the palm a way you show respect for creation.*

*May the Spirit of God rest upon*

---

*your full name !*

*“How to Spot the Holy Spirit!”*  
*Family Spirituality*

*Have you intuitively known how to handle a tough situation in your family?*  
*That's **WISDOM**.*

*Have you stopped yourself from getting angry at your child long enough to think what it feels like to be in his or her shoes?*  
*That's **UNDERSTANDING**.*

*Have you clearly and firmly stated your beliefs about right and wrong to someone in your family?*  
*That's **COUNSEL**.*

*Have you hung in there when you wanted to throw in the towel?*  
*That's **FORTITUDE**.*

*Are you open-minded, letting go of superstitions, prejudices, and small-mindedness?*  
*That's the gift of **KNOWLEDGE**.*

*Do you realize you need God's help and that all of life is a gift?*  
*That's **PIETY**.*

*Have you felt are, perhaps the day you first held your child in your arms?*  
*That's **FEAR OF THE LORD** (or **AWE**).*

*These are the gifts of the Holy Spirit, signs that God's love is flowing through your life. The gifts are yours - look for them!*



## Family Session

### “Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus”

Welcome to everyone. This is your first family session of a most exciting year. Moreover, just this past weekend, we introduced you to the parish community and asked for their blessing and support as we prepare together to receive the sacraments of Confirmation and Communion. You are the first group in our parish to do this, and that means it is an even more special time for you and for us as a parish!

On Sunday, you received a “Serve with Love” pin and tonight we will be learning just how we will make this an important part of our year together.

Let us start tonight, though, with a story....

#### God In Between by Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

This is the magical mythical tale of a poor village at the foot of a hill – a topsy-turvy town with no roads and no windows, where the people sneeze through tall tangled weeds and trip over rocks as big as watermelons. Surely God would help them, they decide ... but how God can be found, and where should they look? They soon find out that the answer is much nearer than they thought.

Discussion ...

With your family, ask this question:

How do we share God’s love with each other? Do we always recognize it?

The first apostles did not always recognize this either. Listen and watch as we see what happened when Jesus was trying to explain how important this love is.

*(see script below)*

Where have you seen Jesus at work in your family, parish, and community? Turn to a family near yours and discuss. On the footprint attached to your packet, write how you see Jesus at work in our community. Bring forward and place in the center of the church.

Opportunities for Serve with Love

Ask 1 person from each family to come forward to pick up their

“Serve with Love” papers

Chart also available on parish website [holycrossoh.org](http://holycrossoh.org)

Go to sacraments, then “Serve with Love”

<http://www.holycrossoh.org/confirm/serve.html>

Section on kiosk, bulletin column

Family response sheets

We know that we cannot really do the work of Jesus without his help and the help of God’s Spirit working through us and through the Church. Tonight’s prayer asks for that help in an unusual (well, not SO unusual) way...

For prayer ritual: Signing of the Senses

At your Baptism, your parents and godparents signed your forehead with the Sign of the Cross. This meant...

Tonight, we will ask God’s blessing on our children just like we do at the Rite of Acceptance into the Catechumenate ... and we sign all of our senses so that all we think, say or do is in the name of Jesus.



sung response: .... choose: We are God’s people, the flock of the Lord  
I will walk in the presence of the Lord #798  
Kendzia – ps. 116 (change walk to...)  
We praise you, we bless you, we thank you

Intercessions:

Help us to use our eyes ... to recognize the needs of those around us

Help us to use our lips ... to speak your message of encouragement,  
hope and love

Help us to use our ears ... to hear the cries of the poor, the disadvantaged,  
those who have no voice in our society

Help us to use our hearts ... to feel love and the need to love

Help us to use our shoulders ... to carry one another’s burdens

Help us to use our feet ... to carry us to put our time and talents  
into use for others

Help us to use our whole selves to ... be your presence in our families,  
in our Church, in our communities, and our world

Close with: Christ, Be Our Light (Haas)



## \* PLAY \*

The first apostles did not always recognize how we are called to serve with love. Listen and watch as we see what happened when Jesus was trying to explain how important this love is. ..

(Enactment of washing of feet, corporal works of mercy, Mt. 25 ff.)

### ***Scene ... at a table ... Jesus and his disciples ...***

Storyteller: Here we are at the table gathered for a meal. In the time of Jesus, it was the custom for the servant of the house to greet guests at the door and to take off their sandals and to wash their feet. It was the way to honor them, to welcome them, and to help them feel comfortable in the home. Of course, the owner of the home wanted them to feel welcome, but it was the servant's role to do the actual washing.

So... let's see what happens this night!

Peter: Hey, Zebedee, how's the new boat?

Zebedee: Oh, it's great! You should have seen how much we caught today – the nets could hardly hold them all!

John: Did you hear the Romans are raising taxes again?

Peter: No, it doesn't surprise me, though.

John: What did Jesus say that one time? Give to Caesar what is Caesar's?

Zebedee: I have something I'd like to give to Caesar.

Peter: Never mind that. Where is Jesus anyway? I wish he would get here so we could eat.

John: Isn't it nice to be here together! What a day we have had – so many adventures ... and believe me, I am really glad to sit down and enjoy a good meal and the company of such good friends!

*(Jesus arrives)*

Peter: Teacher, there you are! Good! We are starving! Sit down!

We have saved the best seat for you!

*(Jesus ignores the invitation to sit down)*

John: How was your day!

Jesus: Great! I have so much to do these days, and so little time!  
Being about my Father's work is quite a challenge, but I  
love every minute of it!

Zebedee: (disciples begin to take off their sandals) Gosh, this is going to feel  
good!

*(Jesus picks up a towel and bowl of fresh water)*

Peter: Hey, wait a minute ... what are you doing?! You should not be  
washing our feet! That's the job of a servant! Stop! You  
aren't a servant. You're ... well, you're .... you're .... well,  
Jesus!

Jesus: Gosh, you have been with me all these years, and you still  
don't understand what I am trying to teach you.

Zebedee: Hey, we're not that bad ... we figured out some things  
eventually, didn't we? C'mon, give us another chance,  
tell us again.

Jesus: Don't you see? I am your servant, that's why I am washing  
your feet. And I have some news for you!  
Unless I wash your feet, you will have no inheritance from me.

Peter: Oh, well in that case, wash my feet ... and my hands ...  
and my head as well!

Jesus: But there's even more. I want you to wash the feet of other people  
just like I am doing.

Zebedee: Hmmm ... this is getting a little harder ...

John: Well, just how are we going to do that? People are going to be  
more than a little surprised when we start going around with  
bowls of water and towels. We thought you had other plans  
for us.

Jesus: I have always had plans for you, you are right about that! and  
some pretty big plans at that! Listen carefully, and I will tell

you what serving other people is all about – it's about more than towels and water, you'll see!

When you see someone who is hungry, you are seeing me.  
 When you see someone who is thirsty, you are seeing me.  
 When you see someone who needs clothing, you are seeing me.  
 When you know someone is alone, that person is me.  
 When you hear of people who suffer for doing the right thing,  
     those people are me.

Peter:       Wait a minute! We see those people all the time. None of them were you!

John:         Ooooh, this is so confusing.

Jesus:       (sighing!)  
               Listen again.  
               Whatever you do for even the least among us, you are doing for me. I am in every person you meet, every single person. Sure, sometimes you might have to look a little harder... but I'm in there! I'm IN each and every person.

Whatever you do for even the least among us, you are doing for me.

I am asking you to be like me, to wash each other's feet, to be the servant, to SERVE WITH LOVE all God's people. That's what it means to be a disciple of mine.

John:        You know, Jesus, this is going to be hard to be you. We're just regular old fishermen, just ordinary people, and some of us are pretty young to do all you're telling us.

Jesus:       Oh, how well I know that! That's why I promise you that I will always be with you, my Father will send the Holy Spirit to make you strong in love, to help you love all people with God's love ... and you know what else?

Zebedee:    No, what!

Jesus:       You will also have each other to count on, to work together. That's what community means. You, me, each other!

Peter:       Well! I guess if you're part of this story, it makes a big difference! All right, I'm in. How about you guys? (looking at the other disciples)

John and Zebedee:   Count us in!

Peter:           (looking out at all the families gathered here tonight)  
Hey, how about all of you?! Are you ready to follow Jesus?  
Are you willing to Serve with Love?

Jesus:           Thank you! It's just what I was hoping for today!  
Now ... how about that dinner?



## Family Session 2

# Remembering Who We Are and Whose We Are

Welcome! Introduce yourselves!

Welcome especially godparents or those who are accompanying someone from this year's Children of Light program.

### Let us pray

**Loving God,  
be with us in a special way tonight  
as we gather as your people journeying together  
to share the new life of our children  
and the faith that makes us one.  
May we be strengthened in our resolve to be  
faithful and wholehearted in our  
response to your call.  
Form us as a people of faith, hope, and love  
shining witnesses to your presence in  
our families, communities, and world.  
We ask this through Christ Jesus, our Light.  
AMEN.**

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-27) read by \_\_\_\_\_

The first Christians made the Eucharist the center of their lives.  
Every week they went to the Temple to pray, just as they always had.  
Then they gathered in one home or another to remember Jesus.

Before sharing the Lord's Body and Blood,  
the people remembered with joy their Baptism  
and the coming of the Holy Spirit.  
They sang songs of praise to God.

The Christians were like family to one another.

Everyone was welcome. Everyone shared.  
 Rich people shared what they had with those who were poor.  
 People who had no money shared their prayers and their talents,  
 helping one another.

These first followers of Jesus amazed all who saw them.  
 “Look!” the people said. “See how these Christians love one another.”

In short time, many people began to follow their example and joined  
 this community because of their love.

The Word of the Lord!

The early Christian community must have been pretty special people! What were some of the things they did? Is our community like this? With the people you came with, answer this question: **HOW IS OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PARISH LIKE THE EARLY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY?**

We try very hard, but we’re not perfect, are we? We are always growing to be the community Jesus called us to be.

Luckily, we don’t have to do it alone! We have Jesus with us, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit all along the way! I hope that tonight our actions and our stories will help us to know that a little bit better!

We have a lot of things right here in front of us that are reminders of just how all of this happens!

We are going to talk a lot about Baptism tonight, which is why we asked your godparents (or another person) to be with us.

**At our Baptism, we were signed with the cross of Christ on our foreheads. Let us now make the sign of the cross again to remind us that we want to be Christ’s friends.**

*As each symbol of Baptism is mentioned, show the object on the table:*  
**When we were baptized, we became members of Jesus’ group of friends called the Church. Here on the table are reminders of the good things that happened on that day.**

- We were washed in the holy water and all our sins were taken away
- We were anointed with oil to share in Jesus’ work as prophet, priest and king
- We were given a candle to remember that Jesus lights the way
- We received a new white garment to show we were new Christians
- We heard God’s Word inviting us to be like Jesus

**There are some special people here with us tonight celebrating another step on your journey of Initiation**

We would like to do something special tonight using our symbols. Led by the cross of Jesus, we are going to ask everyone to form a procession to the waters of Baptism. You will need your Baptismal candle. Please walk to font, and bless yourselves in the waters of Baptism, and then light your Baptismal candle. Please follow the directions and begin to form a circle in the center of the Church.

When the circle has formed.

Those who are preparing for Confirmation and Communion please stand in front of your parents, godparents, or others who came with you tonight.

**Parents and godparents, trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of these children.**

**When you were very young, you were not able to answer these questions for yourself, so we ask you to renew your Baptism promises by saying I DO after each of these questions.**

**Do you believe in God the Father, the Creator, and Giver of all Life?  
Do you believe in Jesus Christ his Son and our Brother who came to  
show us the way to live our lives with love and compassion for all?  
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit who strengthens us to be signs of  
God's love in our world?**

**This is our Faith. This is the Faith of the Church. We are proud to  
profess it in Christ Jesus the Lord.**

As we prepare for the anointing of Confirmation and for sharing the meal that Jesus has invited us to, I would like to close with a story.

Please blow out your candles and quietly return to your seats.

When I was little ... family table that Dad made.

Tell the story: The Table Where Rich People Sit by Byrd Baylor

In your folders is a page for your scrapbook that has a table on it. Spend a minute or two talking with those who came with you about what "riches" are around your table.

Also, in your folders there is a blue paper for each child in Children of Light. This is a Scavenger Hunt that we invite you to do before our next Family Session. (Some of you might want to start it this evening – quietly!)

### A reading from the Acts of the Apostles (2:42-27)

The first Christians made the Eucharist the center of their lives.  
Every week they went to the Temple to pray, just as they always had.  
Then they gathered in one home or another to remember Jesus.

Before sharing the Lord's Body and Blood,  
the people remembered with joy their Baptism  
and the coming of the Holy Spirit.  
They sang songs of praise to God.

The Christians were like family to one another.  
Everyone was welcome. Everyone shared.  
Rich people shared what they had with those who were poor.  
People who had no money shared their prayers and their talents,  
helping one another.

These first followers of Jesus amazed all who saw them.

"Look!" the people said. "See how these Christians love one another."

In short time, many people began to follow their example and joined this community because of their love.

The Word of the Lord!





### Family Session 3

## **“We Are A Community of the Spirit”**

Introduce yourselves to those sitting around you.

Invite all those serving as sponsors to stand! You have a special role in the lives of these young people. Some of you are their godparents, some of you are newer in your relationship to them ....

Most importantly, these children see in you someone who exemplifies a Christian life. Perhaps they see in you more than you do! Listen to them, and come to discover the gift of God within you and the Spirit's actions in your actions.

Tonight's topic: "We Are a Community of the Spirit" So, what does that mean?

This is the newest piece of our life together this year in Children of Light!

I hope by the end of this evening, you will know a little more just

who this Holy Spirit is ... because the Holy Spirit has been within you

and among us for a long time ...in you since your Baptism! (Did you know that?!)

Notice the displays around the Church. Many of you have been sharing about this Holy Spirit in your classes in the day school and PSR. When we have finished this evening, please go visit some of these displays. (booklets made by grade 2 depicting the sacraments of initiation and reconciliation; posters depicting gifts/talents, prayer to the Holy Spirit, etc. – good idea to use!)

Do you remember the story you heard at Mass yesterday about the little boy in the temple? Samuel was the name of the boy, and Eli was his teacher at the temple. Let me re-tell that story for you ...

What did Samuel hear God say to him? (I don't know either, but I can imagine it was pretty important, because Samuel grew up to be a very great and wise leader in his community of the people of Israel.) What do you think God might have said to Samuel? Can you imagine God asking someone your age to do such a great thing!

Let me tell you something about grown-ups (because I have been one longer than a lot of people in this room!). God asks grown-ups to do something, or be someone all the time, but even we don't always figure out this message. Why, even when Jesus was on earth

and spending everyday with his closest friends, they didn't figure out what Jesus was asking them! And he was right there, not just a voice!

He told them that he had a special plan for their lives which made them pretty nervous. But he promised to send them help ... he called that help the Holy Spirit. He even gave the Spirit a special name – He called the Spirit a Paraclete.

We are going to learn this story with the help of Mrs. Hubbard.

**“What’s A Paraclete?”** from **Echo Stories for Children** by Paige Zyromski

“It’s the Spirit of Jesus, right by our side”

I would even think you might say that the Spirit is even closer – inside each of us since Baptism!

Remember how the story told of the wind and the flames? We might not be able to see the Holy Spirit as wind, or a dove (like last week’s story), or flames of fire, but we can see the Spirit of Jesus in many, many ways – in our parish, in our world, in our families, and even right there in our hearts!

So, tonight, I am going to ask you to turn to the people you belong to ... and answer this question: Where do I find the Spirit of God?

Flames ... Where do I find the Spirit of God in my parish?

Doves ... Where do I find the Spirit of God in my family?

Hearts ... Where do I find the Spirit of God in the world?

When you go home to work in your scrapbooks, you can cut these out, or turn them into a mobile, or any other creative idea you come up with!

Ask people to voice some of their responses ....

In the packets you received tonight, there is a whole lot of information! I would like to go through the sheets with you.

The top sheet (yellow) is a list of **coming events!** Please note the date February 3.

There is a meeting for anyone who would like to help plan the Family Retreat Day.

\*\*\* I also need to change the date for your Liturgy choice. We need to send your names, dates and times to the Bishop’s Office in order to delegate our priests to confirm our young people.

There is also an orange packet about **Reconciliation** which I would invite you to spend time with.

Speaking of Reconciliation, there is a parent talk scheduled on February 24 called **Reconciling Families**. There is also a kids component which I will do in the school at the same time.

There are some **pages about the Gifts of the Spirit** which I offer you as a further reflection about the topic we shared tonight which can be for your Scrapbooks.

There is a another sheet you might be interested in that is about **a website** connected with our parish religion texts. They have a lot of useful things that pertain to you and this experience of re-Ordering the Sacraments of Initiation.

I am sure you have found the **Scavenger Hunt** page by now! When we finish tonight, you and your sponsors might want to do a little walk around the church to figure out some of the answers you had trouble with!

On the table in front of us are the symbols we usually see each time we gather, with a few new ones added tonight.

Water ... Baptism

White gown ... Baptism

Bread and Wine ... Eucharist

Candle ... Baptism

Oil .... Baptism, yes! But also for Confirmation! This holy oil is called Chrism. The Bishop at the Cathedral blesses CHRISM during Holy Week and each parish receives a supply for its use. Oil is healing, strengthening, makes holy ...

Dove ... remember the story of Jesus being baptized by his cousin John at the Jordan River ... a dove appeared in the sky and the voice rang out:

“This is my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Did you have a dove appear at your Baptism?

This is how artists show the Spirit of God ...

a dove, a movement of wind, something you can feel but do not always see...

We are going to close this evening with a short prayer and blessing.

When you are confirmed, Father (or the Bishop for our other program) will lay hands over your heads and ask the Spirit of God to “confirm” or to “affirm” what God has already begun in you. And then each person is signed with the holy oil, just like at Baptism, in the sign of the Cross. So, I ask all the parents, sponsors, and other adults to place their hands on the shoulders of all the children preparing for Confirmation and Communion in our parish. (Hands on shoulders is a sign of being companion, walking the journey with each other.)

Most loving God,

May the Spirit of God rest upon these children.

The spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding,

the spirit of right judgment, the spirit of courage, the spirit of knowledge,  
the spirit of reverence, and the spirit of awe.

May they and we, as parents and sponsors,  
come to know you more fully,  
that we may come to love you more deeply,  
and follow you more closely  
today and in the days to come.

AMEN.

I ask that you make a Sign of the Cross on the forehead of one another,  
and then exchange a Sign of Peace with one another.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. AMEN.



## FAMILY SESSION 4 MEMORIES AND TRADITIONS

### IN CHURCH

Gather in Church as would be done on Sunday  
Send one person to the hall with the loaf of bread to share.

Introductions: children preparing for Confirmation and First Communion  
parents  
grandparents  
others  
*children in our parish Catechumenate and their families*

Prayer: Let us pray:  
Loving God, we are your people  
your family in Jesus.  
We thank you for the many joys, blessings, and memories  
that have come to us through the people with us tonight  
and with those who have gone before us in faith.  
Help us this evening to listen to their stories, to listen to your story,  
and to work together with your Son to write yet a new story  
of your love in our lives.  
We ask this through the same Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

You brought with you ... people ... bread ... traditions  
Tonight, we hope that you have an experience that helps you know what sharing life in a  
community of faith means!

One of the times we met, we had some great discussions about families and our  
Baptisms, we blessed ourselves with the waters of Baptism, re-lit our candles  
representing Christ our Light,

Tonight, we begin in a different way ...

For those of you who brought traditions: please turn to the people around you, introduce  
yourselves, and share a tradition you have in your family. If you don't have one, listen  
closely and you might discover one you might want to try.

When you hear the "*chimes*", please bring your discussion to a close and focus your  
attention back here once again.

Now turn to your group again, and think of things you would like to do as families but  
don't. (Share reasons why – costly, too much preparation) Is there any one of these  
ideas that you could begin?

*(chimes)*

Where do these traditions come from? (Something our parents did before we came along, something that came from another country, etc.) And it is important that we remember just what these are or they will someday be forgotten. (Ex.: grandma – bread, blessing what she bakes, etc.)

*(chimes)*

I have a story to share with you. Sit back, get comfortable, and listen very carefully.

Read: Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox.

This delightful story tells of Wilfrid, a young boy who lives next door to an old folks' home and who encounters his elderly neighbors when he asks them, "What's a memory?" Each provides a different answer, except for Miss Nancy who cannot remember anything until Wilfrid helps her to recover her memory. A sensitive story of the grace children and the elderly share, and of the sacred character of ordinary experience.

What is a memory? (Discuss with your group)

<i>Something warm</i>	<i>something from long ago</i>
<i>Something that makes you happy/sad</i>	<i>something precious as gold</i>

When Jesus shared that special meal with his friends, he said "Do this in memory of me."

And each time we share that meal we do just that ... and we join with all those others in our community, and communities all over the world, to do just that. We listen to the stories of those who have lived long before we do; we do the very same actions, say the very same words, and share the very same meal of bread and wine ... in memory! To make real today what has been real for many, many generations. ...

Hand out "Memory" page to be completed at home. It can be placed in your scrapbook.

Ritual:	Candle	<i>something warm</i>
	Bible	<i>something from long ago</i>
	Crucifix	<i>something that makes you happy/sad (death/resurrection)</i>
	Loaf of bread and wine	<i>something precious as gold</i>

A reading from I Corinthians 11:23-26

We bring forward the candle (something warm) to remember that it is Jesus who lights our way.

We bring forward the Bible (something from long ago) to help us remember the stories that have taught people about Jesus and God's chosen people through generation after generation.

We bring forward the crucifix (something that makes us happy and sad). Sad that

Jesus died for us, but happy in the new life that was his through the Resurrection.

We bring forward bread and we bring forward wine (something as precious as gold) gifts that Jesus shared with his friends, gifts that were his very life.

(As each gift is brought up the aisle, child holds up the gift for all to see)

Song: "We Remember"

Let us pray:

Almighty and Eternal God,  
in Baptism you give us new life in the Spirit.  
In that same spirit and power, keep us all in your care and may we always  
proclaim with our words and actions, the good news of salvation.  
Renew in us the power of your life within us and fill us with excitement for your  
gospel.  
Help us to come to know Jesus so that we may journey on the path of salvation  
with you and one another.  
We ask this through Christ Jesus our Lord. AMEN.

We will all now go on another journey to our parish hall where we will share the bread we brought and the community we share. I would invite you especially to tell one another why you brought the bread you did, any stories that you shared tonight, or ideas that encouraged you to share "something more" with the young people in our midst.

When you get to the hall, you will see all the breads we brought on a very long table down the middle of the hall. In an organized fashion! the procession will lead us to stand around the bread table where we will do a Blessing. (*This blessing was taken from Holydays and Holidays: Prayer Celebrations with Children by Gaynell Bordes Cronin. See p. 83-86. We did selections from this service about bread baked and shared.*) We invite you to sample the "work of human hands" we have among us. After you have shared in bread and stories, you are encouraged to take home the stories you heard and the memories you treasure until we meet again!



## *Children of Light Family Retreat*

Saturday, April 5, 2003

### *8:30 a.m. to Lunchtime!*

- 8:30 a.m.      We will begin with muffins, juice, and coffee in the parish hall  
                  Families need to pick up packet of material  
                  In the packet: Schedule for the day  
                  Pages for scrapbooks, etc.  
                  Information regarding liturgical celebrations
- 8:45 a.m.      Set the tone for the day, go through packet of material for the day  
                  Gather in groups  
                  Take time for bathroom breaks, etc. as you go from station to station  
                  Appoint someone in your group to be time-keeper (adult).  
                  Appoint someone in your group to be leader – carry balloon)
- Do echo pantomime
- 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. (20-25 minute periods)
- Bake bread in the hall kitchen  
 Assemble banners in room 3 or 4 of school  
 Do loaves and fishes project in parish hall (southeast corner)  
 Work on scrapbooks in rectory meeting room  
 Meet in church for information about the liturgies
- 11:45 a.m.      Everyone meets in Church for wrap-up of the morning and a  
                  prayer service
- 12:00 noon      Lunch in the parish hall





## *Welcome to our* **Children of Light Family Retreat**

Please help yourself to refreshments! We will begin in a few minutes with some directions and activities.

In the box below, you will see that there are 5 groups of families traveling to 5 different activities throughout the morning. Please note which group you are in! Your group is responsible for getting to each location on time! So, appoint someone to be a “time keeper” for you!

	9 – 9:30	9:30 – 10:00	10:00-10:30	10:30-11:00	11:00-11:30
Group 1	Bake bread in hall kitchen	Meet in church	Banners in school	Art Project in hall	Scrapbooks in rectory
Group 2	Scrapbooks in rectory	Bake bread in hall kitchen	Meet in church	Banners in school	Art Project in hall
Group 3	Art Project in hall	Scrapbooks in rectory	Bake bread in hall kitchen	Meet in church	Banners in school
Group 4	Banners in school	Art Project in hall	Scrapbooks in rectory	Bake bread in hall kitchen	Meet in church
Group 5	Meet in church	Banners in school	Art Project in hall	Scrapbooks in rectory	Bake bread in hall kitchen

At 11:45 a.m., everyone should meet in Church for a prayer service. From here, we will move to the lower Hall for lunch. You’ll be hungry by that time!

**Prayer Service to conclude Children of Light Family Retreat  
11:45 a.m.**

*Families assemble in church after a morning filled with bread baking, banner making, crafts, scrapbooks, etc.*

*Symbols will be presented and place in front:*

<i>Water</i>	<i>Light</i>
<i>Oil</i>	<i>Scriptures</i>
<i>Bread and Wine</i>	

**Welcome**

**Procession of symbols:** *(someone will read text, someone will present symbol)*

**WATER** Through the waters of Baptism you have been filled with new life and formed as one people and filled with the Spirit of God's love to announce the Good News of Jesus to people everywhere.

**LIGHT** Receive the light of Christ. This light is entrusted to you to be kept burning brightly. Walk always as children of the Light, and keep the flame of faith alive in your hearts.

**OIL** You give us the oil of salvation to strengthen and transform us into the likeness of Christ your Son who is Priest, Prophet and King.

**WINE** The Blessing Cup that we share is a communion with the Blood of Christ ...

**BREAD** Though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all share in the same meal and the Bread that we break is a communion with the Body of Christ.

**SCRIPTURES** Receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. May these Words bring you life. May you continue to grow in love and to Serve with Love all God's people.

**Let us pray:**

**God of all time, you love us more than we can understand.  
You are the source of all our blessings.  
We thank you for the example and teachings of your son Jesus.  
We thank you for the gifts and guidance of your Holy Spirit.  
We thank you for the special people in our lives.**

**Help us to respond to your generous love for us  
by becoming more generous and loving to others.**

**We pray most of all today for those preparing for Confirmation and Holy Communion; may they be especially guided by your Holy Spirit.**

**Grant this through Christ our Lord. AMEN.**

Reflection

**We would like to end this day together asking God's blessing on us all.**

*Call forward the older children preparing for Confirmation with their younger brothers and sisters.*

**Lord, as these young people prepare to celebrate the Gift of the Holy Spirit at their Confirmation we thank them for their witness to their families, especially their younger brothers and sisters. May they know our love and Your love through the support and witness of this community of faith.**

*Call forward those celebrating their Confirmation and First Communion.*

Lord, these children stand before you eager to receive your Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation and to share with us for the first time at the Table of the Lord. May their joy inspire us all to renew our own faith and recommit ourselves to your mission in our world.

Call forward those in our Catechumenate preparing for Baptism of Profession of Faith in the Church, and Confirmation and First Communion.

**Lord, bless these children preparing for full Initiation in the Church. The families here present and our parish community have enriched their journey. May they experience you in the waters of new life and in their Confirmation and First Communion at the Easter Vigil.**

*Invite parents (and any other brothers and sisters, grandparents or sponsors joining us today) to stand.*

**Lord, as one people united in your Name, make us all one body in Christ.**

***May we grow in love for one another in our families  
and in our Church that we may be witnesses to the ends of  
the earth.***

***Blessing over all***

† May God who has begun this good work in you ...

Let us offer one another a Sign of Peace.

*And now, on to lunch downstairs*

## APPENDIX C

### Re-Ordering the Sacraments of Initiation

#### Section One

In Section One, please circle the number (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree or 6=does not apply) that best describes your understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion **prior** to your family's participation in the *Children of Light* process.

**A. Prior to participating in the *Children of Light* process, I believed that in the sacrament of Baptism...**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree	NA
	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>1. one becomes a child of God</b>	(3)	(3)	(7)	(12)	(59)	(2)
<b>2. one is free from Original Sin</b>	(2)	(7)	(5)	(11)	(57)	(2)
<b>3. one becomes an heir to heaven</b>	(2)	(12)	(20)	(13)	(37)	(2)
<b>4. one becomes part of the Catholic Church</b>	(1)	(0)	(5)	(19)	(57)	(3)
<b>5. with the oil of Chrism one is anointed with the Holy Spirit</b>	(1)	(0)	(9)	(9)	(63)	(4)
<b>6. the community celebrates the first step in receiving a new member</b>	(0)	(2)	(6)	(13)	(61)	(4)
<b>7. a person receives one sacrament of three, that initiates him/her into the Church</b>	(0)	(6)	(10)	(15)	(52)	(3)

**Please Comment: What is your strongest belief regarding Baptism?**

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**B. Prior to participation in the *Children of Light* process, I believed that in the Sacrament of Confirmation...**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		NA
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8. one is an "adult" in the Catholic Church	(7)	(8)	(12)	(28)	(28)	(3)	
9. one is a "soldier of Christ"	(8)	(15)	(13)	(17)	(30)	(3)	
10. one has full understanding of the teachings of the Church	(13)	(26)	(21)	(14)	(10)	(2)	
11. one is now a full member in the Catholic Church	(2)	(7)	(9)	(16)	(49)	(3)	
12. one has completed the need for religious education/formation	(27)	(26)	(18)	(5)	(7)	(3)	
13. one is eligible to be married in the Church	(12)	(15)	(12)	(9)	(32)	(6)	
14. one is fully initiated into the Catholic Church	(0)	(1)	(18)	(12)	(52)	(3)	
15. one receives the second Sacrament of Initiation	(16)	(14)	(13)	(18)	(20)	(5)	

**Please Comment: My strongest memory of my own Confirmation is...**

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**C. Prior to participating in the *Children of Light* process, I believed that at First Communion...**

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		NA
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
16. one becomes closer to Jesus	(1)	(2)	(16)	(12)	(53)	(2)	
17. one receives the body and blood of Jesus for the first time	(0)	(0)	(2)	(6)	(75)	(3)	
18. one completes initiation into the Catholic Church	(26)	(13)	(23)	(7)	(12)	(5)	
19. one is now a full member of the Catholic Church	(24)	(23)	(19)	(5)	(10)	(5)	
20. one receives the final Sacrament of Initiation	(24)	(28)	(12)	(7)	(10)	(5)	
21. one shares in the most memorable of sacraments	(0)	(3)	(5)	(22)	(51)	(5)	

**Please Comment: My strongest memory of my First Communion is...**

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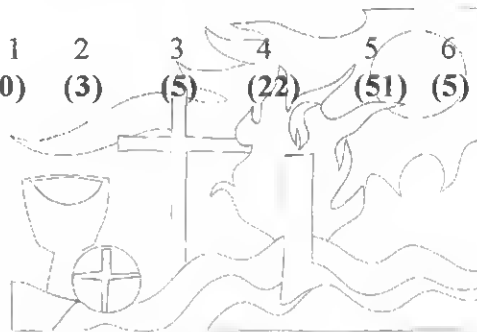
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**D. Please respond to the following two statements and, if you wish, give a reason for your answer:**

**22. I remember more about my First Communion than my Confirmation**

1 2 3 4 5 6

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### 23. I remember more about Confirmation than my First Communion

1      2      3      4      5      6

In Section Two, please circle the number (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree or 6=does not apply) that best describes your understanding of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion since your family's participation in the Children of Light process.

### Section Two

**A. Since participating in the *Children of Light* process, I believe the following may be stated regarding the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Communion):**

	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree		NA
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
1. Baptism is the first sacrament that begins the initiation process into the Catholic Church	(3)	(0)	(1)	(6)	(72)	(4)		
2. Confirmation is the second sacrament that is part of the initiation process when the bishop, through the laying on of hands, bestows the Holy Spirit on the baptized believer and anoints the candidate with Holy Chrism	1 (3)	2 (10)	3 (9)	4 (17)	5 (43)	6 (4)		
3. First Communion completes ones initiation into the Church as one "comes to the Table" as a full member of the community	1 (2)	2 (7)	3 (14)	4 (12)	5 (46)	6 (5)		
4. Changing the order of celebration of Communion—Confirmation to Confirmation – Communion gives a different meaning to Confirmation	1 (6)	2 (8)	3 (14)	4 (15)	5 (34)	6 (9)		

If you wish, comment on how the celebration of Confirmation at Communion changes the meaning of Confirmation for you:



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Comment on how First Communion as the final sacrament of Initiation affects you:

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	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree		NA
<b>5. Baptism, Confirmation &amp; Communion are Sacraments of Initiation that receive new members into the Church and this reception is not based primarily on understanding all Church teachings.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(1)	(5)	(11)	(36)	(29)	(4)	
<b>6. At Baptism, one is washed in the waters of new life, freed of sin and begins the process of initiation into the Church</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(0)	(0)	(5)	(19)	(57)	(5)	
<b>7. At Confirmation, the Holy Spirit is bestowed upon the candidate and the person is anointed with Holy Chrism</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(0)	(1)	(6)	(23)	(50)	(6)	
<b>8. At First Communion, the candidate completes initiation as the Body and Blood of Christ are received at the "table of the Lord."</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(1)	(1)	(10)	(20)	(48)	(6)	
<b>9. Confirmation symbolizes that one is a full member of the Church, with full understanding of her teachings</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(9)	(24)	(25)	(13)	(11)	(4)	
<b>10. Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation is based on full understanding of what each sacrament symbolizes.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(13)	(15)	(18)	(23)	(13)	(4)	
<b>11. Reception of the Sacraments of Initiation alleviates any further need for religious formation/education.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(55)	(20)	(4)	(1)	(1)	(5)	
<b>12. The Sacraments of Initiation are celebrated at Mass when the community gathers for worship since these actions are not private but public acts of the community.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(4)	(4)	(17)	(24)	(32)	(5)	
<b>13. Confirmation happened at First Communion because it was convenient</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	(27)	(27)	(14)	(4)	(3)	(11)	

**14. Celebrating both sacraments at one of one or both.**

If you wish, explain your response:

**Liturgy diminished the significance**

1	2	3	4	5	6
(16)	(8)	(7)	(22)	(26)	(7)

**15. Confirmation sealed my child(ren)'s Baptism so that (s)he was ready to share at the Lord's Table**

1	2	3	4	5	6
(3)	(10)	(17)	(29)	(22)	(5)

For the final question in this section please check all that apply to your answer.

**16. When my child was confirmed at the time of First Communion (s)he believed that (s)he:**

\_\_\_\_\_ received the gifts of the Holy Spirit

\_\_\_\_\_ was free from all sin

\_\_\_\_\_ was finished with faith formation

\_\_\_\_\_ was an adult Catholic

\_\_\_\_\_ was called to full participation in the life of the Church

### Section Three

Please respond to the following questions regarding the Restored Order of the Sacraments of Initiation. If you need more space, use the reverse side.

**1. Does the Restored Order of Baptism, Confirmation and Communion make sense to you? \_\_\_\_\_ Why or Why not?**

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**2. What are your concerns regarding Confirmation being celebrated at the time of First Communion?**

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3. The Bishop is the Ordinary Minister of Confirmation but was unable to be present for Confirmation at Communion at Holy Cross. Did this cause you concern? \_\_\_\_\_ Explain \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Other comments or questions:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Part Four

In order to understand the demography of those completing this survey, please circle all that apply:

1. Gender:                      Male                      Female
2. Age:            18-30                      31-45                      46-60                      60+
3. Baptized Catholic as a:    Baby            Child            Teen            Adult

Baptized in another Christian Denomination (name religion)

\_\_\_\_\_

Baby            Child            Teen            Adult

A convert to Catholicism?    \_\_\_\_yes            \_\_\_\_no

5. As a Catholic I was confirmed at age:
- 6-8            10-12            13-14            16-18            adult

6. My religious formation took place in:  
Catholic Grade School                      Catholic High School  
Parish School of Religion                  Home (with \_\_\_\_\_)  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. My children receive religious formation in the following settings:  
Catholic Schools                              Parish School of Religion  
Parish Sacrament Programs                Youth Ministry Programs  
Generations of Faith Process              Home (with \_\_\_\_\_)  
Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Number of my children confirmed **at** First Communion: \_\_\_\_\_
9. Number of my children confirmed **after** First Communion: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for participating. Please return this form in the enclosed envelope by February 1, 2005.

Return also your card (with your name) for the drawing. The winner will be announced February 15<sup>th</sup>.

--Fr. John McNulty

## Annotated Bibliography

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Rites of the Catholic Church as revised by the Second Vatican Council*, vol. one. Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1990.

This volume contains the documents with introduction for the Initiation Sacraments as decreed by the Second Vatican Council. These documents clearly state the Church's understanding of these sacraments.

Begolly, Michael J. "Anointed with the Spirit on the Way to the Table: Celebrating Confirmation prior to First Eucharist—A Case Study." In *The Many Presences of Christ*, eds. Timothy Fitzgerald and David A. Lysik. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1999: 32-51.

The author of this article gives a presentation on the decision of the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania to establish the policy to re-order the Sacraments of Initiation. It gives the rationale for the policy and the guidelines for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in that diocese. This policy mandates the re-ordering of the sacraments for all parishes which is different than the "method" being used by the Diocese of Cleveland in determining the age of celebration Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Bokenkotter, Thomas. *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 2004.

This volume gives an excellent overview on the history of the Catholic Church. Part One provides a very good synopsis of the development of the early Church.

Bourgeois, Henri. *On Becoming Christian*. Mystic, Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications, 1984.

The Sacrament of Confirmation is in "search of a theology." The author discusses the history of the Sacrament of Confirmation and seeks to determine at what age the sacrament should be celebrated.

Brown, Kathy and Sokol, Frank C. (ed.). *Issues in the Christian Initiation of Children: Catechesis and Liturgy*. Chicago: Liturgical Training Publications, 1989.

A series of articles discussing issues focused on the initiation of children into the Church. Chapters 7 and 8 are significant in stressing the roles of parents and community in the process of initiation.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Re-visioning Confirmation within the Christian Initiation of Children." *National Bulletin on Liturgy*. 33 (Summer, 2000).

This publication provides an excellent presentation on the Restored Order. It provides a good historical development with theological background. This is an excellent resource.

Cavalletti, Sofia. *The Religious Potential of the Child*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1992.

The author presents the "Good Shepherd" catechetical process for children ages three to six. It presents the religious potential of the children this process centers on. It is important in helping understand the possibilities of Confirmation being experienced by children at the time of First Eucharist.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Early Church*. New York: Penguin Press, 1967.

This is a classic text on the growth of the early Church. The section on Cyprian and Augustine is very useful. He also provides a good overview on the Pelagian heresy.

Coffey, Kathy. *Children and Christian Initiation*. Denver, Colorado: Living the Good News, Inc. 1995.

This is a practical guide of developing a catechumenate for children. The section on the spirituality of children is important.

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This book is a popular overview of the history of the Catholic Church. It is very readable and is a good resource for any person desiring to have an understanding of the development of the Church.

Duggan, Robert and Kelly, Maureen A. *The Christian Initiation of Children*. New York: Paulist Press, 1991.

The authors present a process by which religious formation of children should be done as one is initiated into a faith community that will foster and support

continued faith development. Religious development is not primarily cognitive as much as experiential. Chapter 6 of this book stresses the role of the community in the formation of children.

Figgess, Sandra. *Christian Initiation of Older Children*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1990.

A resource used by unbaptized children preparing for initiation into the Church. It follows the steps of RCIA process.

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This is a popular presentation on the different ways to stage the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation in the parish setting.

Gelpi, Donald L. *Committed Worship, A Sacramental Theology for Converting Christians*. Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993.

Chapter V gives an understanding of the restored Catechumenate. Chapters VI and VII give a historical perspective of the Rites of Initiation of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist.

Henchal, Michael and alli. *Celebrating Confirmation Before First Communion*. San Jose, California: Resource Publications, Inc., 2002.

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Heuls, John M. “Age for Confirmation.” In *Disputed Questions in Liturgy Today*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1988: 9-16.

This article focuses on the “proper” age for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It discusses the question from historical, theological, and canonical viewpoints.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Age of Confirmation.” In *More Disputed Questions in the Liturgy*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996: 167-78.

This article is one that continues the discussion begun in the article found in *Disputed Questions in Liturgy Today*. It further discusses the application of the policy for determining age for Confirmation in North America.

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. "Preparation for the Sacraments: Faith, Rights, Law." In *More Disputed Questions in Liturgy*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1996: 33-60.

This is an excellent article that discusses faith and the reception of the sacraments. It also discusses the "right" one has for the reception of the sacraments. It "spells out" clearly what the Law of the Church says regarding one's rights and the reception of the sacraments.

Huck, Gabe (ed.). *The Liturgy Documents*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Program, 1980.

This is a great resource for the documents published on the Liturgy. The *Constitution on the Liturgy* is found in this work.

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Chapter 5 gives overview on the history of Confirmation and a discussion on the proper age at which this sacrament should be celebrated.

Johnson, Maxwell, ed. *Living Water, Sealing Spirit: Readings on Christian Initiation*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1995.

This is a collection of essays by theologians that explore the sacraments of Christian Initiation from the perspectives of history, theology, and praxis.

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. *The Rites of Christian Initiation: Their Evolution and Interpretation*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999.

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Kelly, Liam. *Sacraments Revisited*. New York: Paulist Press, 1998.

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This book consists of a series of articles that supports celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation at a later age. It stresses the understanding of Confirmation as the call to discipleship one has in sharing in the ministry of the Gospel.

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The author discusses the Order of Christian Initiation as the model to be used in the initiation of children of catechetical age into the Church.

Martos, Joseph. *Doors to the Sacred*. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1981.

The author presents an historical review of Christian sacramental life which gives understanding to faith. He discusses the pattern of sacramental development. Part Two of this book provides an excellent historical development of the sacraments.

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This publication provides a framework for a youth ministry process that can be implemented in a parish setting.

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\_\_\_\_\_. "Christian Initiation in the Roman Church from the Fifth Century Until Vatican II." In *Sacraments and Sacramentals. Handbook for Liturgical Studies*, Vol. IV. Ed. Anscar J. Chupungco. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2000: 49-92.

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This is a practical tool to form catechists in the use of Liturgy and the lectionary in forming children in the faith.

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The book consists of a series of articles on Baptismal catechesis. The sections on the Lectionary as a catechetical tool is important in understanding the use of the RCIA model in the process of initiation.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Confirmed as Children, Affirmed as Teens*. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990.

This book provides a series of articles regarding pastoral suggestions regarding the issue of involving teenagers into the life of the Church. It suggests various rituals, celebrations, and activities to recognize the passage of young people into their roles as adults in the Church. It presupposes that these individuals have celebrated the Sacraments of Initiation in the Restored Order.

Yarnold, Edward. *The Awe-Inspiring Rites of Initiation: The Origin of the R.C.I.A.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994.

Three chapters focus on the reordering of the sacraments as modeled in the R.C.I.A. process.